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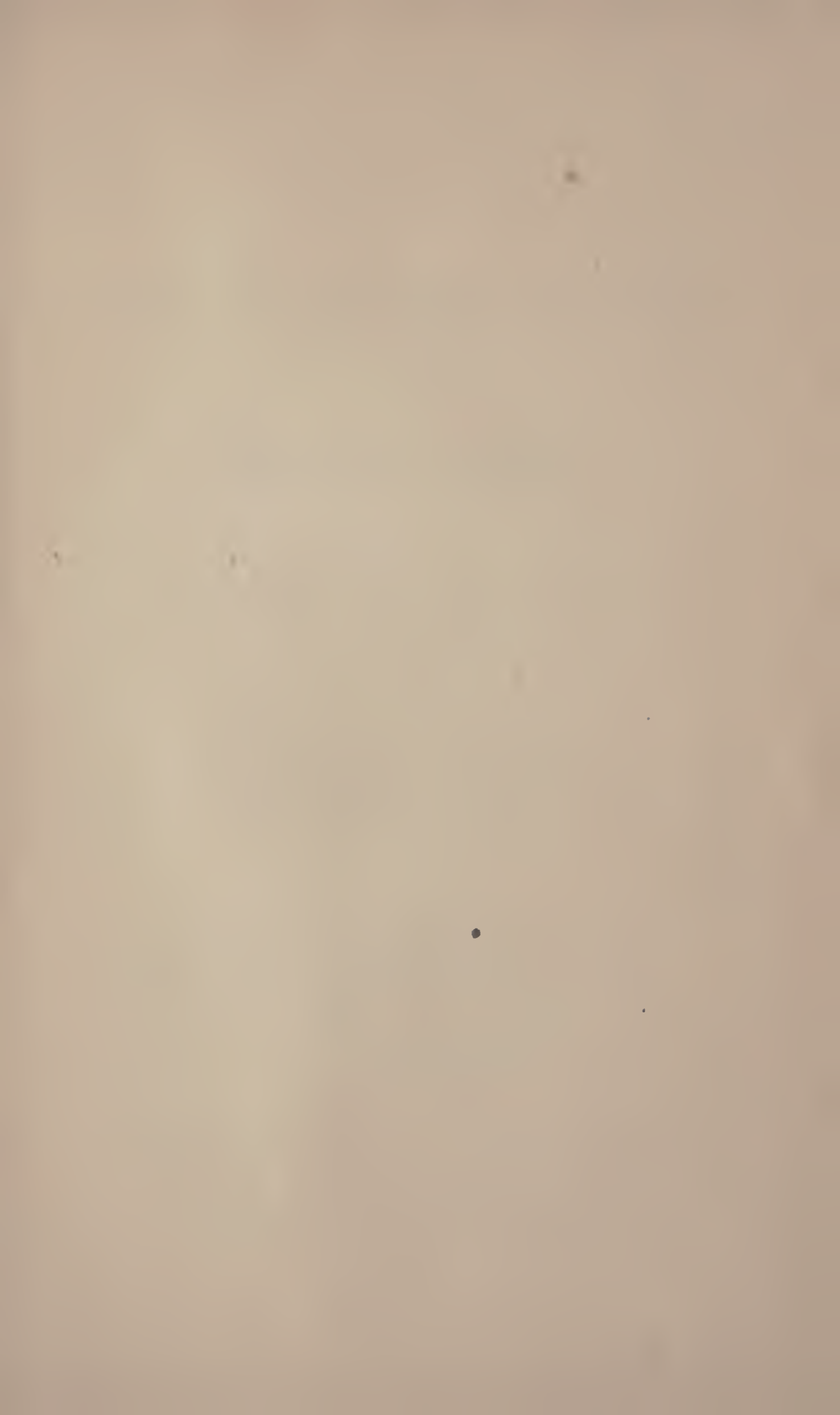
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THE  
HARVEST AND THE REAPERS;

Home-work for All,

AND

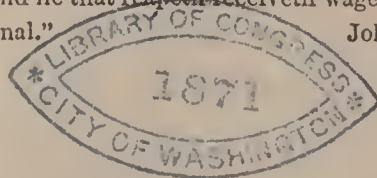
HOW TO DO IT.

BY

REV. HARVEY NEWCOMB,

AUTHOR OF "CYCLOPEDIA OF MISSIONS," "HOW TO BE A MAN,"  
"HOW TO BE A LADY," ETC, ETC.

"Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white  
already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gather-  
eth fruit unto life eternal." John 4: 35, 36.



BOSTON:

GOULD AND LINCOLN,

59 WASHINGTON STREET.

NEW YORK: SHELDON, BLAKEMAN & CO.

CINCINNATI: GEORGE S. BLANCHARD.

1858.

BV3790  
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TO THE  
CONVERTS IN THE REVIVAL  
OF  
1858,  
THIS BOOK  
IS RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY

Dedicated,

BY  
THE AUTHOR.



## P R E F A C E .

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THE design of this book is not only to awaken a deep interest in personal efforts for the conversion of souls to Christ, but to suggest some plans for the better direction of that interest, so as to bring the members of our churches generally into living contact with the unevangelized masses around them. It is the result of much thought and considerable experience. A portion of the latter part of it was published by the author during the Revivals of 1831, and was thought to have been useful. Having been

long out of print, it has been, with some modifications, incorporated in this volume. The author indulges the hope that there may be many of those who desire to see the "Great Awakening" of the past year perpetuated, and the church bringing forth perennial fruits, to whom the suggestions contained in these pages will be welcome. And, with a sincere desire to do good to the souls of men, and to advance the cause of the blessed Redeemer, this humble attempt is committed to the Christian public.

BROOKLYN, OCTOBER, 1858.

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T H E

# HARVEST AND THE REAPERS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF NOMINALLY CHRISTIAN LANDS.

WE believe that the whole world is to be converted to God, because the fact is revealed in his Holy Word. But, viewed in the light of human wisdom and of history, such a result seems impossible. The Gospel has been preached for eighteen centuries and a half, and yet the vast majority of the inhabitants of the earth remain in profound ignorance of the Saviour; and of those who have heard of him, the great majority are under the dominion of popish superstition. Even of the eighty-eight millions of nominal Protestants, but a very small proportion can be reckoned as true

spiritual Christians. On the continent of Europe, the great mass of nominal Protestants appear to have no saving knowledge of Christ. But even in the most christian lands, in England and America, where evangelical religion exerts the greatest power, the proportion of those on whom the Gospel exerts no saving power is very great. In both these countries, the great cities present a mass of semi-heathenism, at once startling and appalling.

These great centres of population and influence bring the extremes of society into juxtaposition. In the same street may be found the princely mansion and the abode of squalid wretchedness. This produces the impression, on the one hand, that reformation is hopeless; and on the other, it tends to repress effort for personal elevation. And yet, one living in the midst of these scenes, on examination, will be surprised at the vastness of the destitution, ignorance, and irreligion which prevail in these places. Who would believe that, in the metropolis of the most christian nation of the Old World, the great fountain-head of benevolent enterprise, there are three hundred thousand more people living in the neglect of all religion,

than the whole number of converts to nominal Christianity, effected by the united efforts of modern missions throughout the world? Or who would believe that, in thirteen cities of this, the most free and enlightened christian nation upon earth, the number of semi-heathen who live in the habitual neglect of all religion, is nearly equal to the number of nominal converts from heathenism throughout the world? Yet the returns of actual census prove these astounding facts.

Both in Great Britain and the United States, the provision for public worship, if equally distributed, would be nearly an adequate supply. But, in all cities and large towns it falls greatly short; while in all parts of the country there are sparsely settled regions which are wholly destitute.

The Census Commissioner of Great Britain supposes that, if there were seats for fifty-eight per cent. of the population, there would be sufficient provision for all who would be present at one time. And, for the whole kingdom, there is provision for fifty-seven per cent. I have estimated an adequate supply of seats at two-thirds of the number of inhabitants, supposing that one-third

would cover the infants, sick, helpless, and those detained with the care of them. Upon this estimate, we had, at the last census, nearly a sufficient provision. There were fourteen millions of sittings for twenty-three millions of people. But actual examination will, I think, show that not more than one-fourth are detained by these causes.

The city of London, with a population of 2,688,000, has church sittings for but 800,000, leaving 1,888,000 who could not be seated in the churches. Thirteen of the principal cities in the United States, with a population of 2,048,785, have sittings for 852,436. With a population 600,000 less than London, they have 52,000 more sittings than that city; and yet the deficiency in these cities amounts to 1,200,000.

The whole number connected with christian congregations, gathered by missionaries in heathen lands, so far as could be ascertained in 1854, was 1,572,000. Considering the zeal and success with which modern missions have been prosecuted, it is not a little surprising, that the regular hearers of the Gospel, brought to the nominal profession of



Christianity, by the united efforts of the christian world for nearly three-quarters of a century, should not equal the actual heathenism of the single city of London. A country of nearly two millions of people, on the other side of the globe, and destitute of the Gospel, would excite the earnest sympathy of the christian public. And yet a population nearly equal to this exists, in a like state of spiritual destitution, in the heart of the British metropolis! We advert to these facts, not to disparage zeal for foreign missions. Would God it were a thousand-fold more deep and earnest than it is. But we are prone to look far off for objects of beneficence, while we overlook the misery and wretchedness at our own doors. It must be confessed, however, that those who manifest the most zeal for foreign missions are most active in efforts to remove spiritual destitution at home; and we can only say, in the words of our Lord, "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone."

In estimating the destitution of church privileges, it seems fair to allow that twice as many people as there are sittings may hear the Gospel at

different times in the same place. But, in estimating the number who habitually neglect public worship, we may safely take the whole number who could not be seated in the churches at one time; as the churches, on an average, are seldom, if ever, more than half filled.

The population of the city of New York is 629,000, with church sittings for 197,000; leaving 432,000 habitual neglecters of all religion — more than twice the number of members in all the mission churches in the world! Or if we deduct one-fourth for those necessarily detained, we still have more than one-third who never enter the house of God; and we find not more than one-sixth of the population at church at one time.

In Brooklyn, (consolidated city), reckoning the population at the present time, we have 208,000 people, with sittings for 71,000; leaving 137,000, who habitually neglect public worship, and, of course, have no religion — a number greater than the nominal converts from heathenism in all Asia.

This estimate is confirmed by actual surveys. In a recent canvass, on a street inhabited by re-

spectable people, in fifteen families were found thirty-five adults, sixteen of whom attended no place of worship. In another instance, four hundred and eighty-eight families were visited, of whom one hundred and thirty-four were Catholics. Of the remaining three hundred and fifty-four, but one hundred and forty-one had any regular place of worship; and as the information was obtained from the persons themselves, it is probable that a much larger number live in the neglect of public worship; for many who are only occasional hearers, will say that they belong to some congregation. And yet this is by no means the worst part of the city. The second and fifth wards, adjoining each other, have an aggregate population of twenty-four thousand, with church sittings not to exceed five thousand. Thus, in this "city of churches," the most favorable view that can be taken presents a mass of heathenism that is truly appalling. And, by the facts stated, it will be seen that the state of things is still worse in the city of New York.

From the statement already made, it appears that the destitution is found in nearly the same proportion in a dozen other cities of the Union, so

that it may be presumed to be general. Nor is it confined to our cities. In the new countries of the South and West, extensive settlements are found, which have no regular means of grace. In the valleys among the mountains, neighborhoods have been found where a sermon has not been preached for twenty years. In one of these remote valleys, the first clergyman who ever visited it, was requested to preach a funeral sermon for a person who had been dead twenty years! Nor is this state of things confined to the new countries of the West and South. In almost every township in the Eastern States, not excepting the most highly favored portions of New England, there are dark corners and remote settlements, whose inhabitants live in almost total neglect of public worship and of all religion; and high up in the mountains are people who live in a state of abject and heathenish degradation. Nay, more, there are families living within the sound of the church-going bell who neglect the ordinances of God's house, and spend his sacred day in the pursuit of pleasure or in listless inactivity.

When I commenced this investigation, knowing

what masses are to be seen in our cities every Sabbath seeking their pleasure, and having some personal acquaintance with the heathenism that abounds, I supposed that the neglect of public worship was greater in the cities than in the country. But, from the facts that I have obtained, it appears that the reverse is true. Actual surveys have been made in different parts of New England, which agree so well as to furnish reliable data for an estimate. The following statements may be relied upon as accurate, so far as they go.

MAINE. — A report was made on this subject to the General Conference of Maine, in the year 1854, by a committee appointed the year before. This committee sent out circulars to all parts of the State, to persons connected with various denominations. From the answers received, they selected fifty-three, — all that appeared to have been carefully prepared. These fifty-three cities, villages and towns, contained in 1850, a population of 127,098. The average attendance upon public worship, upon four counts, was 26,583, a little more than one-fifth. The absentees from these congregations were 10,051. Allowing 1000 for

strangers and transient worshippers, this shows 35,634, a little more than one-fourth, to be connected with the religious worship of all denominations, in these places; leaving nearly three-fourths who have no such connection, and who may be presumed to be living in the neglect of all religion. But in some of the most important of these places, the neglect is still greater than the average shows.

Another report was made in 1856, which says: "In the most favored localities in this State, not more than from one-third to one-half of those who might attend public worship are ordinarily found in any house of worship on the Sabbath. Estimates from ten towns, taken promiscuously, showed that but little more than one-seventh of the people ordinarily attend public worship."

The pastor of a church in one of the towns here reported, writes in April, 1858: "There are districts in this town in which not more than half a dozen persons are constant in their attendance; and yet, if I appoint a five o'clock meeting in the neighborhood on the Sabbath, there will be from thirty to forty present. So in all this region, people who

seldom go further than their own school-house will come in to such a meeting. There are but few who do not sometimes listen to a sermon. During the past winter and spring, there has been a great increase of neighborhood meetings, and also more attendants.”

NEW HAMPSHIRE. — A committee was appointed by the General Association of New Hampshire, in 1856, to ascertain the proportion of the population of the State, who neglect public worship. At the meeting of the Association in May, 1857, that committee made a report. The committee sent out two hundred circulars, to as many different towns. They received returns from eighty-two towns, with the following result :

“The whole number of places of worship reported in these towns, occupied by the several denominations, is as follows: Congregationalists, including the Presbyterian churches 103, Baptists 32, Freewill Baptists 29, Christians 9, Methodists 33, Episcopalians 6, Unitarians 5, Universalists 8, Quakers 3, Union Congregations 6, Second Adventists 2, Swedenborgians 1, and Catholics 1; total 238.

“The reported average attendance upon the public worship of these several denominations is as follows: Congregationalists and Presbyterians 12,081, Baptists 2,225, Freewill Baptists 1,645, Christians 755, Methodists 3,685, Episcopalians not reported, Unitarians 475, Universalists 235, Friends 50, Union Congregations 170, Second Adventists 360, Swedenborgian and Catholic not reported; total 21,330.

“The whole population of these eighty-two towns, is 108,466, of which 38,692 are estimated as regular attendants upon public worship, leaving 69,774, or a fraction less than two-thirds of the whole population, who are regarded as neglecters of the sanctuary.”

The towns here reported cover more than one-third of the State. They are all in the rural districts, embracing no city. The committee express the opinion that they show a fairer proportion of regular attendants upon public worship than the remaining towns; and they think an accurate investigation of the facts would show that at least two-thirds of the population of New Hampshire



are not, except very indirectly, under the influence of the ordinances of evangelical religion.”

VERMONT.—In June, 1856, the General Convention of Congregational ministers and churches in Vermont appointed a committee to ascertain and report the facts respecting attendance on public worship in the state; and aided by individuals in all evangelical denominations, the committee were able to present, in June, 1857, the results of their investigation. These were obtained by means of a circular sent to every town in the state, in which there was a person known who would take charge of the matter. The examinations were made by well-informed individuals in or near each school district. The towns reported are such as embrace a fair specimen of the state, with large and small villages, the thickly and sparsely settled portions. From these returns it appears, as the committee say, “that there are in Vermont at least 22,064 families in which there is no *habitual attendant* on evangelical worship; which, allowing five persons to each, would embrace 110,320 souls: a fraction more than one-third of the whole population. The *average* attendance

on evangelical worship is 55,410; less than one fifth of the population. Upon non-evangelical meetings, 9,088: about one thirty-fourth of the inhabitants. There are 77,640 *habitual neglecters* of all public worship: a little less than one fourth of the whole population; and 37,564 children of suitable age not connected with any Sabbath school. There are 38,544 occasional attendants: not quite one eighth of the population.

“There is nearly one meeting-house to every 500 souls in the state, and there are seats for every 756 of 1000. Three quarters of these seats are in evangelical houses, and are sufficient for all who can ordinarily be present at any one time. In some localities there is a deficiency of seats, but, as a whole, ‘there is yet room’ in our evangelical churches for all the people.

“The neglecters of public worship are not wholly foreigners, nor those bred to vice and crime, nor yet those in extreme poverty and hard service. Many of them are descendants of a pious parentage. Among them are some of our most respectable citizens, — intelligent, enterprising, and liberal in supporting the Gospel. Some of them

are our next-door neighbors, our friends, our very kindred, 'bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh,' soon to meet us at the bar of God."

Rev. J. F. Stone, Secretary of the Vermont Domestic Missionary Society writes, with reference to these statements, as follows: "I had become convinced, before measures were taken to collect the statistics contained in this report, that not one-fifth part of the population of our state were usually found in any place of public worship upon the Sabbath. And I have not yet found occasion to change my estimate. I think the Committee, in their care to guard against extravagance, have given a more favorable estimate than a closer and more complete examination of the state would sustain. But the showing is bad enough, and ought to move the friends of Christ to vigorous effort and earnest prayer."

MASSACHUSETTS. — At the meeting of the General Association of Massachusetts, held June 22, 1858, a committee appointed the year previous to investigate the subject, reported, as the result of careful examination, "that in the four States of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, and Ver-

mont, about one half of the inhabitants do not attend the sanctuary at all — that not more than about one fourth of the whole population regularly attend any evangelical church — that in Massachusetts there are more than two hundred and fifty thousand persons who seldom, if ever, come within the sound of the gospel.”

A venerable clergyman, who was for some time settled in the mountainous districts of Berkshire county, writes that about one seventh of the population included all who could be depended on as hearers of the Gospel, in the various places where it was preached.

CONNECTICUT. — An aged clergyman writes of the town where he is settled, in the central part of the state, that “about one fifth of the population are attendants on the three congregations having a name and a place for worship in the town. About two fifths are habitually absent from all places of worship, except camp-meetings and funerals. The other two fifths are aged and withered or in the years of infancy. In other rural districts where I am personally acquainted, the numbers have ranged between a fifth and a sev-

enth, who have been reliable attendants on sanctuary privileges.”

Rev. T. O. Rice, of Connecticut, says, “It is a painful and startling fact that not far from one half of our whole population do not come under the direct influence of the means of grace. They are in the condition of the heathen, without a Sabbath, or sanctuary, and without a spiritual teacher.”

Rev. H. Hooker, Secretary of the Connecticut Missionary Society, gives an abstract of the returns from their missionaries, from which it appears that the number of habitual neglecters of public worship in the small country towns of Connecticut, where they labor, ranged from six hundred down to twenty in each town.

OHIO.—Rev. L. Kelsey, District Secretary of the American Home Missionary Society for Ohio, writes :

“My opinion, based on my acquaintance of sixteen years in Ohio, is, that one third of the rural population are absent from the house of God on the Sabbath. They are very seldom or never present. Another one third are only occasionally present at public worship — perhaps two or three

or four times a year. This leaves only one third of our population who may be said to be habitually present at the houses of God on the Sabbath. In the large towns and cities, the proportion of habitual neglecters of God and religion is still larger than in the rural districts.

“The population of this state, old enough to be benefited by attendance on public worship, is not far from fifteen hundred thousand. Hence there must be half a million of people never in the houses of worship—another half million only occasionally present, making one million of our people habitually absent from the public worship of God.

“These views I have submitted to others, more extensively acquainted in the state, and all have given their opinion that the number of absentees is greater than the proportion here stated. What can be done to evangelize these masses? There is but little hope of a man, till he can be brought to the house of God, and thus under the influence of the Gospel. But this can never be done, till every church considers itself a missionary station,

and every member a missionary to the perishing immediately around him.”

THE WHOLE\* COUNTRY. — From a pretty extensive acquaintance in different states, and from all the information I can gather, I think it safe to say, that as large a proportion of the people attend public worship in New England as in any other part of the country. I believe the proportion is much greater than that of the whole country. I cannot learn that thorough investigations, like those that have been quoted, have been made out of New England. The fact that I have received but two responses to inquiries made out of New England, shows that public attention has not been sufficiently directed to the subject to lead to examination. This I regard as evidence of apathy rather than of any better state of things. A clergyman, who was one of the pioneers of the Home Missionary Society in the West, and who has labored extensively in Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, and Iowa, (now in Illinois,) writes as follows :

“I proposed your two questions to two substantial farmers of my congregation, and they gave it

as their opinion that three fourths of the people of the West habitually neglect public worship; that only one fourth of the Protestant population could be considered as belonging to the class of persons that attend worship on the Sabbath, and that not more than half of these are regularly there. My own mind was inclined to fix upon one third instead of one fourth as the true proportion, and that not more than one in six of our population are in actual attendance in any place of worship on the Sabbath day. Others have stated it as their opinion that not more than one in ten were there. In some places *where there is a New England element*, or a settlement made up of emigrants from New York, New Jersey, or Pennsylvania, the proportion is much larger. But aside from the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, and Episcopalians, the attendance is very small and irregular. Out of these denominations, which amount perhaps, in the whole country, to four and a half millions, but few Protestant people are found ordinarily in the house of God. So far as I have observed congregations in the



West, few more attend Sabbath worship, who are out of the church, than would be in the congregation if all the members of the church themselves were present regularly every Sabbath-day. Hence I presume that four and a half millions comprise all, and probably more than all the average attendance on the places of Protestant worship on the Sabbath-day, in the whole country. Or, in other words, we have four and a half millions out of twenty-seven millions, on the Sabbath, under a course of gospel instruction. This calculation will certainly be within bounds, if applied to adults, and probably quite too large.

“The causes which lead to the neglect of gospel institutions on the Sabbath, in connection with human depravity, are the soul-destroying errors of which the country is full. Spiritualism has its three millions; Universalism and other forms of Infidelity as many more. Popery and German Rationalism, Intemperance, Sabbath desecration, Gambling and kindred vices, all conspire to produce this result. Nor are they done away with except in those places where evangeli-

cal ministers labor. As I go to attend the meetings on the Sabbath, I see some riding out for visiting, some at various kinds of work, some going out with their guns to hunt on the prairie, and some fill the bar-rooms and saloons to drink and gamble all day and all night. I made some remarks on this subject in the Sabbath school, a few Sabbaths since; when a German physician, who prides himself upon an education of fifteen years, whose father was a minister, was very angry, and said his children should not attend Sabbath school any more. He was willing, he said, that his children should be taught *religion*, but he did not want them to be taught that it was wrong to hunt, or drink, or play cards on the Sabbath; and so they got up quite an excitement against me on this account."

These facts present a condition of things that must be deeply humiliating to every heart that beats warm for the coming of Christ's kingdom. This is the boasted land of freedom and of Christianity. And Christianity has certainly made great progress among us, the last fifty years. It is believed that a much larger proportion of the people

are church members than at any period of our existence, except in the early settlement of those portions which were founded by christian emigrants. It is believed, also, that religion now has a stronger hold of the public mind than it has had at any previous period since the Revolution. And yet it appears from these facts that not more than one sixth of the population are regular attendants upon public worship. And if we allow one fourth of the whole to be detained at home by age, sickness, and infirmity, there will still be three fourths of the remainder who habitually neglect the worship of God. Nor are these the poor alone, nor foreigners only. One of the foregoing reports states that, in a country place, many of them are persons occupying respectable stations in society, and some of them even the sons of the church! It is so in our cities. Here are habitual neglecters of the worship of God in all classes of society,—in Fifth Avenue and on Brooklyn Heights, as well as in the Five Points and Red Hook.

The Scriptures classify those that neglect the worship of God, among the heathen, and invoke

upon them the curse of God: "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the *families that call not upon thy name.*" It is no misnomer, then, to call the habitual neglecters of public worship HEATHEN. They are heathen without the excuse of not having an opportunity to hear the Gospel. And if the inhabitants of Sodom shall rise up in the judgment against the rejecters of Christ among the Jews, the heathen of our day will rise up against those in christian lands who live like the heathen, and condemn them.

But, the guilt of those who neglect the Gospel cannot excuse Christians from the responsibility of laboring for their salvation. It is true, they have no taste for the Gospel, and this is their condemnation. But if Christ had left us to ourselves, because we had naturally no love for him, nor desire after him, we should have perished. They need to have the Gospel carried to them, and a taste for it created, before they will appreciate, or embrace it.

## CHAPTER II.

### DUTY OF CHRISTIANS TO THEIR UNCONVERTED NEIGHBORS AND COUNTRYMEN.

IN view of the facts stated in the foregoing chapter, the momentous question arises, "How are these masses to be reached and evangelized?" To this question, selfishness replies, "If they desire the privileges of the Gospel, let them seek them. We that have them, have provided them for ourselves and our children. Let them do the same. Many of them can find accommodations in our churches if they desire it; and those who cannot, are as well able to provide for themselves as we are." There is some truth in this; but much more error. It is true that those who desire the privileges of the Gospel may in almost all cases secure them. And it is also true that it is the duty of every man to contribute his share, according to his ability, to sustain the institutions of the Gospel. But, if the

Lord had dealt with us on this principle, what would have been our condition? When our fathers bowed down and offered human sacrifices to their gods *Woden* and *Thor*, in the deep forests of oak, they would never have sought for a better religion, if christian philanthropy had not sent it to them. And even we ourselves, while our hearts were alienated from God, had no appreciation of the Gospel. We should not have sought him, if he had not, in his loving-kindness, drawn us. Nay, God would never have given us his Son, if he had waited for us first to seek his grace. Christ Jesus came into the world "to seek and to save that which was lost;" and we are to follow his example, by seeking to save the lost. All our arrangements for maintaining the institutions of the Gospel ought to be made with this end primarily in view, instead of seeking first our own convenience and edification. But, if this principle were carried out, it would revolutionize our mode of proceeding, especially in our cities. Instead of congregating our churches at central points, and building edifices so costly that none but the rich

can worship in them, we should build our churches where the population is, and upon such a scale that "the rich and poor can meet together." In answer to an inquiry addressed to him in relation to the state of Rhode Island, Rev. Dr. Wayland remarks: "In this country, if we keep on in our present course, building expensive churches, and keeping up our expensive worship, our population will all be heathen, both *in the church* and *without*."

But the question still returns, "*How are these masses to be reached?*" Can it be done by an immediate increase of churches and ministers, sufficient to provide a sitting for every one that ought to assemble with the people of God on the Sabbath, to worship Him, and hear his Word? To build chapels, with 500 sittings in each, at the low estimate of \$10,000, would require 274 additional ones in Brooklyn, at an outlay of \$2,000,740. And to supply these chapels with ministers would require more than a quarter of the number introduced into the ministry in a year, by all evangelical denominations, in the United

States.<sup>1</sup> For the city of New York it would require 864 new chapels, at a cost of \$8,640,000; and it would take the whole number of ministers graduated in a year to supply them. In the thirteen cities named in the first chapter, it would require 2,836 new churches to supply the destitution, at a cost of more than \$28,000,000. And it would take more than three times the annual increase of ministers to supply them.

But, having done all this, would the people come to these churches? Such an effort would doubtless result in an increased attendance upon public worship. But we have no reason to suppose that it would secure a general attendance of the indifferent masses. If there were an appetite for the Gospel, they would rush in and fill the empty seats in our churches. Such a plan as this would no more secure the object, than building chapels and employing ministers to establish worship in heathen lands, as an in-

<sup>1</sup> I have reckoned the whole number at eight hundred, by taking the denominations which publish annual reports, from official documents, and estimating the rest about in the same proportion to the number of their churches.



itiatory step, would secure the regular attendance of the heathen.

Although "church extension" must not be abandoned, but needs to be increased as fast as there is a waking up of demand for it; yet an immediate supply of the pressing want, by this means, is out of the question. If it were practicable, it would not reach the bottom of the evil. Neither can the work be done, so far as we can see, by any system of paid labor.

The church of Christ, in its inception, was a *missionary body*. The primitive Christians evidently understood the Redeemer's last command, to "Go and preach the Gospel to every creature," as binding on every individual believer; and wherever they found an unbeliever, they recognized in him one of the "every creature" to whom they were to preach the Gospel. We read in the eighth chapter of Acts, that the church at Jerusalem "were all scattered abroad *except the Apostles*." The *Apostles* remained at Jerusalem. All the rest of the disciples were scattered abroad. "AND THEY THAT WERE SCATTERED ABROAD WENT everywhere, PREACHING *the word*." Here, it is the

usual word rendered *preaching*, and signifies a public proclamation, as that of a crier with news. Afterwards, in the eleventh chapter, another word is used, which literally rendered would be *talking*: "They that were scattered upon the persecution about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch, preaching (i. e. *talking*) the word."

Here are two facts most evident: First, all the disciples comprising the primitive church at Jerusalem, (except the Apostles who remained in that city,) in their flight from persecution, made known the Gospel as they went. Second, they employed every available means, both public and private, to accomplish this object, and to persuade the people to obey the Gospel. Those who could speak in public, and for whom it was proper, spoke without waiting for a formal license. Those who could not speak in public, for want of a suitable gift, and those whom "nature itself teaches" to be silent in public, "talked" the word in private.<sup>1</sup> Even the women, in their appropriate sphere, were employed in this work.

<sup>1</sup> Acts 18: 26.

One of them acted the part of a theological professor to the eloquent Apollos, instructing him more perfectly in the Gospel. Others were helpers of the Apostle Paul.<sup>1</sup>

The commission is repeated in the last chapter of Revelation, in a still broader form: "The Spirit and the Bride say 'come.'" The Holy Spirit of God speaking silently to the heart of the sinner says, "come." The "Bride," the Lamb's wife, which is the church, composed of the body of believers, says, "come." And, lest this should be misunderstood, and taken to mean the church speaking only through her ministers, or by her official acts, as a body corporate, it is added, "and LET HIM THAT HEARETH say, 'come.'" The idea is, that of a crier, proclaiming good news as he runs; and every one that hears, takes up and repeats the tidings, the sound echoing from hill to valley, till all shall hear. Here, then, is a universal license to every one that hears the Gospel to make it known to others, and use every suitable means, by argument and by persuasion, to induce them to receive and

<sup>1</sup> Phil. 4: 3.

obey it. The ministry are indeed the authorized public teachers of the word; the leaders and standard-bearers of the sacramental host. But, as well might we look to the officers of an army to do all the fighting, as to expect ministers to do all the preaching. Every follower of Christ is a christian soldier, enlisted under the banner of the great Captain of our salvation, to conquer this world to Him. And it is his business to be actively engaged in the conflict, and not merely to appear on parade days, and listen to the officers expounding the rules and regulations of the army. It is his duty, *first*, to understand the Gospel; to receive it into his own heart; and to present a living embodiment of it before the world in a godly and devout life; and *then* to use all the powers which God has given him to teach it to others, and persuade them to embrace it.

The heart that is touched with the love of Christ needs no urging to this duty. "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge that, if one died for all, then were all dead." The first aspirations of the new-born soul are for this work. After he has "tasted the wormwood and the gall,"

and experienced in himself what an evil and bitter thing sin is; and when his eyes have been opened to the beauty and glory of Christ, and the richness and freeness of his salvation, he longs that others should share with him so great a blessing. Thus David says, "Come hither, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul." Andrew, when he was called, went and found his own brother Simon, and brought him to Jesus. Philip found Nathaniel. And all those whom Jesus healed published abroad what he had done for them, and induced others to come and be healed. This is one reason why the work of God goes on so rapidly in times of awakening. Every new convert becomes a preacher of the Gospel, unfolding to his associates the precious word of life, which he has received into his own heart, with all the freshness and zeal of one just brought "out of darkness into God's marvellous light."

If any one objects that this would be intruding upon the prerogatives of the ministry, we say that the true ministers of Christ claim no monopoly of the word of life. We are not to confound the Christian ministry with the Jewish priesthood.

This is one of the worst errors of Romanism. The christian minister is in no sense a *priest*. Christ is the only Priest known to the new dispensation. When it was said, "And no man taketh this honor upon himself but he that was called of God *as was Aaron*;" the allusion is, to a direct miraculous call from God, a call to the priestly office. The priest's office was typical, and no one was allowed to enter it, but one of the regular succession of the true lineage of Aaron. But the office of prophet or teacher was open to all. And when young Joshua, in his zeal for the honor of Moses, complained of Eldad and Medad, who prophesied in the camp, without a direct and public commission, and said, "My lord Moses, forbid them," that meek man of God replied, "Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets." So, when Christ's disciples informed him that they had forbidden a man who was casting out devils in his name, because he followed not them, he replied, "Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is on our part." No man can intrude into the pastoral office, without a special call; but I find nothing in Scripture to

prevent a man from addressing his fellow men, on the subject of religion, either in public or in private, more than on any other subject; or that prohibits any Christian, man or woman, conversing as freely on this subject as on any other. And this is preaching the Gospel, and often in the most effective manner. This was, to a great extent, the primitive mode of preaching; and it is the mode necessarily adopted by the missionaries among the heathen, before they can organize regular congregations. It is the only mode by which our "home heathen" can be reached. There is the same necessity for carrying the Gospel from house to house, and speaking it openly in the streets and in public places, to the heathen at our door, as to the heathen in India or China.

The business of reclaiming a lost world is committed to the church, in conjunction with the Holy Spirit. It is the business of the church to apply the truth to the consciences of sinners. It is the office of the Spirit to make it effectual to their salvation. "The Spirit and the bride say, come." And the church is made up of the *individuals* which compose it. The church, as a corporate body, has

no soul. Responsibility rests upon individuals. The Scriptures recognize the conversion of sinners as in some sense the work of the Christian: "He that converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins."<sup>1</sup> "Others *save* with fear, pulling them out of the fire."<sup>2</sup> "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee."<sup>3</sup> God is pleased to use his people as instruments in this work; and ordinarily he blesses their faithful labors and prayers, by the coöperation of his Holy Spirit. We cannot be certain beforehand that he will do so in an individual case; neither can we be certain, when we plant and sow, that God will give the increase. But ordinarily the one follows with as much regularity and uniformity as the other. Harlan Page was a man of no more ability than thousands of Christians, who now belong to the church of Christ. But he was enabled to say, on his death-bed, "I think I have had evidence that more than one hundred souls have been converted to God, through my own direct and personal instrumentality." The same

<sup>1</sup> Jas. 5: 20.<sup>2</sup> Jude 23.<sup>3</sup> Ps. 51: 12.



earnest prayer and faithful effort on the part of other Christians would doubtless be crowned with similar success. And if every Christian would follow his example, how long would it be before the whole world would be converted to God? We will suppose there are ten thousand Christians in Brooklyn. There may be twice that number. Let every one of them be the means of converting one soul every year, and these converts do the same, and every soul in the city would be converted in four years. Let the same course be pursued in all the world, and supposing there are no more than ten millions of real Christians, the whole world would be converted in seven years.

If you saw your neighbor's house on fire, while he and his family were asleep in it, you would not stand by and say, “I am not a regular fireman; it is not my business to interfere.” You would not ask for any commission. You would not think of waiting for him to open the door. You would make no ceremony of entering. And even though they, in their drowsiness, should order you away, you would persist in your purpose, and if necessary break the door to effect an entrance. But your

fellow-creatures, living in sin, are exposed to a danger as much more imminent and dreadful as eternity is longer than time. Their house is on fire. The flames of hell are already kindling under their feet. If we do not rescue them, they may be lost. We have no more right to allow them to go down to the pit unwarned, than we have to sit at ease, and look calmly on, while our neighbor and his family are consumed in their burning dwelling. Nor have we any right to limit the Gospel or the power of the Holy Spirit, and to say of any class of men, that God's appointed means of grace cannot reach them. The Gospel of the grace of God has reached all classes of men, from the filthy and besotted bushmen of Africa, to the refined and cultivated British nobleman; from the bold blaspheming infidel to the bigoted and superstitious papist; from the voluptuary of Corinth to the Pharisaical and persecuting Saul of Tarsus. And what it has done, it can do again. It will never lose its power until "every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess" to Christ as Lord of all.

## CHAPTER III.

### FEELINGS OF CHRISTIANS IN VIEW OF THE UN- CONVERTED.

IN a time of general awakening, the compassion of Christians for their unconverted friends and acquaintances is stirred up to a state of intense emotion. The reason is, that their faith is so quickened by the Holy Spirit as to give a vivid reality to unseen things. They see the perilous condition of sinners, and have some apprehension of the dishonor which they are doing to God and his Son Jesus Christ. But these things are no greater realities at such times than they are at all times; and there is no sufficient reason why these feelings should not continue till the cause is removed. With the Apostle Paul, these feelings were permanent. Hear him: "I say the truth in Christ, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have *great heaviness* and *continual sorrow* in my heart; for I could wish that

myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." Their condition lay heavy on his heart; and he could never direct his thoughts to it without occasioning the deepest grief. It was not a transient sorrow, which time wore away, or which was dissipated or forgotten by diversity of scenes or occupations. It was continual, a deep and settled grief. And what could have such an effect upon the elastic, buoyant spirit of Paul, whose soul was borne up under the weightiest afflictions by heavenly consolations? It was sympathy for his brethren of the Jewish nation who had rejected Christ. He knew the "terror of the Lord," and he was affected to the deepest sorrow, when he contemplated the eternal sufferings which awaited them in the world to come. And so deeply was he affected with the view which he had of their case, that he expresses his willingness, were the thing possible, to be cut off from all the benefits which he expected to receive from Christ, if by that means they could be saved. This does not mean that he really wished to be separated from Christ, or that he would be willing to be cast off forever,

and thus become an enemy of God. This he could not be willing to be. But it was a sincere expression of his feelings towards his brethren, which would lead him to make every possible sacrifice of his own interest for their salvation. Moses expresses similar feelings, when interceding for the children of Israel: "O, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold; yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin; and if not, *blot me*, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written!" It is a sudden burst of disinterested feeling which sinks self in a deep and fervent desire for the good of others. It is an exercise of the same spirit that led Christ to offer up himself for the salvation of men. And in some degree every Christian must partake of the same spirit. In Christ, it was divine compassion pouring out his soul unto death for sinners. In Paul, it was a sacrifice of every thing earthly, and a willingness, if it were possible and necessary, to sacrifice *all things* for the same object. This sympathy for souls made Jesus "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." It gave Paul "great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart."

When we see our friends and others around us in an impenitent state, we ought to sympathize with these feelings of Paul and of Jesus. The impenitent are in a *sad state*. They are sinners against God, unpardoned and unreconciled to him. They are set in opposition to the supreme good. Sin is opposed to holiness. God is holy. Therefore, sinners are opposed to God. This is a sad state to be in; "for who hath hardened himself against God and prospered?" Who can contend with the Almighty? The sinner is already condemned by the law, which he has a thousand times violated. Having set himself in opposition to God, he can no longer look up to him as his Father. He is "*without God*" in the world. Yet, he is absolutely dependent upon God. It is by God's forbearance that he lives. It is upon God's free bounty that he subsists. He is cut off from Christ by his impenitence and unbelief. He has "no part nor lot" in the great salvation. He has no consolation in God upon earth, and no hope of heaven. If he is in affliction, he has no comfort; and beyond this life, all is darkness and terror. He is "already condemned," and "the wrath of

God abideth on him." And yet, he is insensible to his condition. He is trifling away his day of probation without any effort to secure everlasting life. He treads with light step and mirthful heart on the brink of the precipice. He sleeps on the verge of the burning volcano. The feelings exercised by Paul are therefore the natural expression of sympathy. Can you see your friend suffering the agonies of a painful disease, in the most imminent peril of his life, and not feel for him? How much more, when the disease of sin is upon his soul, and he is in the most imminent peril of eternal death? Do you say that such feelings are vain and useless, because nothing that you can do will alter the case? You might as well say so with reference to your grief on account of temporal suffering and danger. Your grief, of itself, will not mitigate the suffering nor diminish the danger. The sovereignty of God is exercised in the one case as well as in the other. But such feelings as have been described are necessary and proper in both cases, and most intimately connected with deliverance. Such a state of feeling

is necessary to lead us to make suitable efforts to secure the salvation of sinners.

God has been pleased, in the economy of his mercy, in a great measure to connect the salvation of sinners with the prayers and efforts of his people. He gives his Holy Spirit in answer to their prayers. He has committed to them the dispensation of his truth. And by the truth, through the Spirit, sinners are converted. But, in effectual, fervent prayer, there must be deep emotion. There must be a pressing sense of want, with an agonizing desire for the object sought. If your child were sick, struggling in convulsive agonies, and drawing nigh unto death, would you not be deeply affected? Would you not, like David, prostrate yourself in the dust before God, and fast and pray and mourn over him as long as there was any hope? But the soul of your child is sick with sin. The disease is increasing more and more upon him. It is becoming more and more seated and confirmed. It is making rapid progress, and if not speedily arrested, it will destroy him forever. Is it not equally reasonable that you should be moved with intense feeling, to fast



and pray, and employ every means in your power to arrest the disease, and restore him to health? And has not God put in your power as many means for his deliverance from sin, as for his recovery from natural sickness? He has promised to hear your prayers. He has given you the means of operating on the seat of the disease, by distilling divine truth, the medicine of the soul, into his mind, and impressing it upon his heart. But you will never do this, until you have a deep and moving sense of his condition, that will lead you, like Paul, to be in great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart in his behalf. You never send for a physician to your child, unless you have some impression that he is really in danger. Neither will you seek healing mercy for your sin-sick child till you have an impressive sense of his condition as a lost sinner. If there is any truth in the alleged connection between the prayers and efforts of Christians and the conversion of sinners, the state of feeling described is indispensable. And, if you are insensible to their condition, you need not wonder that they go securely on, apprehending no danger.

*A proper regard for God*, would likewise naturally lead to the exercise of such feelings as have been described. He is daily dishonored by impenitent sinners. They cast off his authority, refuse obedience to his law, and despise his mercy. They reject the Son of God, the Saviour of men. They despise his cross and trample on his blood, which was shed for the remission of sins. They live in the neglect of all their obligations to God and his Son Jesus Christ. If we regard God as our Father, and Jesus Christ as our Friend and Redeemer, we cannot but be deeply affected, when we see them thus treated by our fellow-men; much more, by our friends, even our own children. How would a man feel, to see his own brothers and sisters treat his father with similar indignity? And shall we not have as much regard for our Heavenly Father? Have we not professedly set him in our hearts above every other object? And shall we be less affected with indignity offered to him, than if it were offered to an earthly friend? Do we love God above all? And can we bear to see our dearest earthly friends at enmity against him? Do we love Jesus?

Have we embraced him as our Saviour? And do we regard him as our greatest Benefactor, to whom we owe everything? And can we bear to see him despised and rejected, and his salvation neglected and slighted, by the majority of the people where we dwell, and even by some of our nearest friends? How can we be otherwise affected by these things than to exercise "great heaviness and continual sorrow" of heart? Is it not suitable and proper to be exercised with sorrow in view of injury attempted against so holy and just and good a Being as God is? He so regards it. When he determined to bring great and sore judgments upon his ancient people for their sins, he directed one of his ministering spirits to "go through the midst of the city, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry for the abominations that be done in the midst thereof;" and then he forbids the destroyer to come near any man "upon whom is the mark." This shows his pleasure at the manifestation of grief on account of sin. Hence we infer that such feelings as Paul expresses on account of pre-

vailing impenitence and unbelief, must be suitable and proper, and pleasing to God.

Such a state of feeling, on the part of Christians, accords with the highest examples we have in scripture and in the history of the church. Such were the feelings of Moses, on the occasion already referred to. His soul was struggling with emotions too big for utterance. He felt that existence would be a burden to him if his request was not granted. He desired not to live and see Israel, his beloved people, exposed to the just punishment of their sin. At other times, also, when the children of Israel provoked the Lord by their unbelief and hardness of heart, he prostrated himself in the dust before the Lord. So did Joshua and the elders of Israel, when the children of Israel turned their backs before their enemies. They were affected not only to see Israel smitten, but to see the cause of the Lord decline, through the sin of his people. He had witnessed the wonders which the Lord had done in the wilderness. He had just seen the walls of Jericho fall down, to make a way for their entrance into the city. But now there was a reverse, Israel was smitten before their ene-

my. On this account his soul was in an agony of grief, and he gave utterance to that earnest prayer, in which he appeals to God, and says, "What wilt thou do unto thy great name?" He was greatly concerned for the honor of God, which was involved in this thing, "for," says he, "the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us around, and cut off our name from the earth: and *what wilt thou do unto thy great name?*" But is not the honor of God equally involved in the prosperity of religion among us? If our children grow up unconverted, and the mass of the irreligious remain in their present state, and religion dies out of the land, who will make mention of the name of the Lord? The feelings of Joshua on this occasion are an example for Christians.

Similar feelings were exercised by Samuel on the defection of Saul. The Psalmist was deeply moved for the honor of God, when he looked upon sinners: "Horror hath taken hold upon me," says he, "because of the wicked that forsake thy law." "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law." "I beheld the transgres-

sors and was grieved, because they kept not thy word." This is the genuine feeling of the true child of God, in view of sin. He is zealous for the honor of God. He does not need to see intemperance stalking abroad in the streets, nor to hear the name of God profaned, nor to behold any other open wickedness, in order to be grieved. Impenitence is enough. This is refusing obedience to God, and withholding confidence from him. It is rebellion and indignity. It is a grief to the godly to see it. Thus Jeremiah grieved: "If ye will not hear, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eyes shall weep sore, and run down with tears." Paul gives utterance to similar feelings, at various places: At Ephesus, he says, for the space of three years, he ceased not to warn every one, night and day, *with tears*. To the Philippians, he says, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, *even weeping*, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ." In the first instance, he was moved with tender compassion for the souls of those whom he warned, because he saw them exposed to eternal death. In the other, he was moved for the honor of

Christ, because some who professed his name, showed, by their walk, that they were the enemies of the cross of Christ.

But especially was this spirit manifested by Christ himself. He had no sins of his own to mourn over. He had no burdens of his own to bear. The treatment he received from the world was of itself insufficient to disturb his equanimity. He had, for himself, no fears as to the future. He looked forward only to "the joy that was set before him." Why, then, did he weep? Why was he "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief?" He wept through compassion for lost and guilty men. He was moved with compassion, when he saw the multitude as sheep having no shepherd. And, when he looked from the heights of Mt. Olivet, and beheld the city of Jerusalem, teeming with inhabitants, devoted to destruction, he wept over it. And doubtless, many of those solitary hours, which he spent alone in the mountains, at the dead of night, were spent in sorrow for the miseries of man, whom he came to save. And Paul says we must be partakers of the sufferings of Christ, and as it were, "fill up that which is be-

hind of the afflictions of Christ, for his body's sake, which is the church." And how can we do this, except by sympathizing with Christ in sorrow for the souls of men?

Such has ever been the spirit of the church, in her brightest days. In the memoirs of holy men, in ages past, we find this the prominent exercise of their minds. Next to sorrow for their own sins was their sorrow in behalf of Christless souls. This was predicted of the church in the "latter days," and it is realized in every Revival of Religion. At such seasons, the church is bowed down in deep sorrow, not only for her own sins, but to seek the salvation of souls. Previous to an awakening, the burden of souls is laid upon the hearts of Christians, so that they sympathize with that "great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart," expressed by the apostle. And great results have always followed intercessory prayer, offered up to God, under the pressure of this feeling. And how glorious the day, predicted by the Prophet Zechariah, when this spirit shall pervade the whole church; when there shall be a universal mourning for sin; when the Lord shall pour upon the house of David



and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, upon all branches of the church, a "spirit of grace and supplication;" when they shall "look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and be in bitterness for him as one is in bitterness for his first-born." Then shall a "nation be born in a day," and the Lord shall extend peace to Zion as a river.

The possession of this spirit of sympathy for souls, and earnest desire for their salvation, is necessary to prepare us to enter upon the work of extending the gospel among the "heathen at our door." As long as we can look upon them with indifference, and feel no responsibility in relation to their condition, we shall make no efforts to bring them to Christ. But how can a Christian, who has the love of Christ in his heart, and who feels for the honor of God, live in a community where from two thirds to six sevenths of the people live in the neglect of religion, and not be deeply moved?

## CHAPTER IV.

### A PLAN FOR CARRYING THE GOSPEL TO "EVERY CREATURE" IN THE LAND.

#### CITIES.

THE evangelization of cities is one of the great problems of the age. The difficulties in the way of bringing the masses under the influence of the gospel are, perhaps, greater than in the country. The extremes of society are at a greater distance from each other. The expense of maintaining Gospel Institutions is much greater, while the means of the numerical majority are more straitened. The provisions which the wealthy and middling classes make for themselves do not reach the poor; and if places of worship are provided especially for the poor, we counteract the leveling principle of the gospel, which brings the "rich and poor together," before the Lord, the Maker of all. We have already shown the impracticability of reaching these masses, by simply opening places

of worship, and making public proclamation of the Gospel. Sufficient provision could not be made; and if it could, the people would not avail themselves of the privilege. The following plan has been adopted in the cities of New York and Brooklyn, and some other cities, and to a considerable extent carried out, with the most encouraging results. It is equally well adapted to every other city.

I. The city is divided into districts and to each evangelical church is assigned a district corresponding in size to the number of members and ability of the church. Efforts are made, by a general committee of supervision, to induce every church to take the district assigned to it, and become responsible for its permanent visitation, so as not to leave in the city a single neglected family.

II. When a church has received its district, the first thing to be done is, to have it surveyed, and the number of families in each house ascertained. Then a map should be made, with the number of each house marked upon it, and the number of families in each house. This should then be divided into sub-districts, embracing from five to

twenty families, according to the number of visitors to be enlisted. The smaller the districts, the more likely it will be to succeed. If more than the latter number is assigned to a visitor, the work will be too onerous, and will be likely to be given up from mere inability to perform it. The next step is, to have a meeting of the church, and after a full presentation of the subject, the districts should be given out to volunteers. In one of the churches in Brooklyn, such a meeting was held, the pastor taking the lead in accepting a district, and nearly a hundred visitors volunteered on the spot. The following objects are embraced in this visitation :

1. The first and most prominent object should be, the spiritual good of every family and every individual; endeavoring, by personal conversation, and other means, to lead the unconverted to Christ.

2. Persuading those who have no place of worship to connect themselves with some Christian Congregation.

3. Inducing parents to send their children to Sabbath schools. This is one of the primary objects, if not the chief of all.

4. Furnishing Bibles to the destitute and distributing Religious Tracts.

5. Reclaiming the vicious and abandoned.

6. Relieving the suffering poor.

III. The work should be under the supervision of the pastor and a committee of the church, or official members, who should see that it is done effectually. Each district should be thoroughly visited at least once a month; and cases of interest should be followed up more frequently.

IV. One of the weekly prayer-meetings of the month should be devoted to hearing reports from the visitors. This exerts a salutary influence upon the church, in bringing them into sympathy with the work, and inciting them to prayer and effort. It likewise operates as a stimulus to the visitors to be faithful.

V. The whole work should be under a central supervision, the object of which is, to attend to the general districting of the city; the assigning of districts to the churches; and to see that the wheels are kept in motion. This general supervision has been exercised, in the initiation of the work in New York and Brooklyn, by the Missionary Committees of the Sabbath School Unions.

But the work is so broad in its design, that it needs something more comprehensive. It in fact embraces, under one simple agency, the work of the *Sabbath School Union*, the *Tract and Bible Societies*, and the *Association for the relief of the poor*. We propose a Board constituted of one delegate from each of the churches, which shall embrace all these objects. Then let all the City Mission, Bible, Tract, Sabbath School, and Poor Associations, surrender their functions to this Board. And let this, so far as possible, localize both the work itself, and the collection of funds, throwing upon each church the responsibility of every thing to be done within its district; the Board operating as a bond of union, and doing only those things of a general nature, which have reference to the whole work, and to keeping it in motion.

It may be asked, "Wherein does this plan differ from that which has been for years pursued by the Tract and City Mission Societies?" We answer: It takes the matter out of the hands of a central organization, outside of the churches, which can never secure their effective sympathy and coöperation, and localizes it, so as to bring the responsi-

bility nearer home; while it leaves each church free to do its own work in its own way. The difficulty in the way of uniting different denominations of Christians, who differ widely in their modes of action, to work together in missionary efforts, is that every one must surrender his own preferences, and come on to a common ground of action, which fully satisfies none. But this plan requires no concession, but leaves every one free to preserve his own mode of action. It does not limit the church, in its denominational action, to the district assigned it; but leaves its parish to its bounds of elective affinity, in its general action. It only requires it to perform certain specific missionary work within the bounds of its own district. And it is understood to be within the discretion of each visitor to cease his visits to any family, when he ascertains that it is connected with any christian congregation and cared for by its pastor and members; though he is at liberty to continue his visits if he finds them acceptable and sees a prospect of doing good.<sup>1</sup> And if the tract distribu-

<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps but just for me to say that in leaving the continuance of the visits, in such case, to the discretion of the

tion is connected with it, this is necessary. But all efforts to proselyte from one evangelical denomination to another, or from one Sabbath school to another, are repudiated and strictly forbidden.

“But why not let every church act on its own responsibility, choosing its own field, without any united action?”

Because, by such means, the ground cannot be fully covered. There is room enough for every one to have a specific field of labor; and it is only by division of labor that the work can be done. The great difficulty, with the plans heretofore in use, is, that they do not sufficiently *localize* the work, and give to every suitable person disposed to engage in it, a specific field, which he can cultivate in his own way.

V. *Mission Sabbath schools* should be established in every locality where the population cannot be provided for in schools already established, or where there are children who cannot be gathered into the church schools; to receive those who are persuaded by the visitors to attend, and to

visitor, I differ from my associates, who consider it necessary that they should cease altogether, to prevent jealousy.



furnish a gathering place for the people on the Sabbath.

VI. So far as practicable, a chapel service, with regular preaching, should be maintained in connection with the Mission schools. But if no minister can be employed, a service should be maintained by the teachers. This is necessary in order to furnish public worship for the people, so far as a desire for it has been awakened.

Having thus sketched the plan, we shall illustrate its practical operation, and show its adaptation to the end designed, by giving examples and results. The keen, sagacious eye of Chalmers, on his first entrance upon pastoral labors in a city, saw the necessity of some such plan as this. The first thing that impressed his mind was the fact that such an immense work as that of carrying the Gospel to the masses in a great city, could never be accomplished by ministers alone. "A few weeks in the wynds of the Salt-market had wrought the conviction in his mind, that, if these swarming multitudes were to be reclaimed, who, hidden from the public eye, were living in ignorance and guilt, and dying in darkness, a *large*

*band of fellow-laborers* must go down and enter with him upon the spiritual cultivation of the neglected territory." His next idea was that of *localizing* the work. The population of the Tron parish, in Glasgow, was eleven thousand. The system of Sabbath schools in existence when he went there, was, to open a school, and invite attendance from all parts of the city, but to depend on voluntary attendance. On this plan, there were not over one hundred children, who attended the Sabbath schools, in the whole parish. To secure a better attendance, he devised the *local* or *mission* Sabbath school system. "He divided his parish into forty different sections, allotting thirty or forty families to each section. He appointed teachers for each section, and told them that their specific business was, to go forth within the limits of their respective districts, and visit every family, telling them they had a Sabbath school in the neighborhood, and requesting the parents to send their children to it." The result was, that the attendance upon the Sabbath schools in his parish soon increased from one hundred to twelve hundred. On his removal from the Tron

church to St. John's, four of his teachers at the Salt-market chose out a new field, containing a population of three thousand six hundred souls, of whom only one hundred and twenty-eight attended Sabbath school. In six months, they opened twenty-six schools, with seven hundred and thirty-two in attendance. "The parish of St. John was divided into twenty-five districts, called *proportions*, each embracing from sixty to one hundred families. In each district one or more Sabbath schools were instituted; male and female teachers were engaged in the work; while a few classes were opened for adult persons." In addressing his "agency," as he called the persons engaged in this enterprise, Dr. Chalmers says, "You are well aware of the power and charm that I have ever been in the habit of associating with *locality*—how I regard this in fact as the only principle on which a crowded town can be brought under a right or efficient system of management—that by the adoption of this principle, the population of a city would be in as fair circumstances for becoming Christian and moral and civilized as the population of any country

parish — that there is a wide and open door for entrance among the families themselves, insomuch that, if any christian philanthropist would assume a district for himself, and give his time and attention to those who reside within its limits, and cultivate an acquaintance with them, founded on good will to our brethren of the species, and the desire in any way to be of service to their interests, it is found that there will scarcely a shut door or a shut heart be ever met in the prosecution of such an enterprise as this, affording therefore free scope for all the undertakings of him whose heart deviseth liberal things, and securing that most encouraging of all outsets to the work and the labor of love, even the almost universal welcome of a thankful and cordial population." The author can testify to the same fact, respecting our own city population. In visiting many hundreds of families, of almost every variety of creed, and of no creed, he has, with very few exceptions, been kindly and courteously received. Nor are the Roman Catholics generally an exception to this remark. When they understand that our object is not to attack their religious views, nor to prose-

lyte, but to do them good, they will receive us kindly and converse freely upon faith in Christ, and upon spiritual religion. And many of them, if they see that we are candid and fair, will enter into a kind discussion of those points on which we differ. But if we go to the house of a Roman Catholic, and make a violent attack on his religion, telling him abruptly that he is in the way to hell, he will resent it, as any other man would resent a similar attack. It is to be admitted, however, that some of them are so bigoted as to abuse any one who speaks to them on the subject of religion; but this is not the case with the better class of them.

After Dr. Chalmers's removal to Edinburgh, he selected, as the scene of a similar experiment, a part of the city, which, a few years previous, had attained an infamous notoriety, by the secret murders of Burke, who enticed people into his shop, and let them down through a trap door, and murdered them for the purpose of selling their bodies to the surgeons. "By an actual survey, it was found that the main street and its adjoining wynds contained four hundred and eleven fam-

ilies, of which forty-five were attached to some christian communion; seventy were Roman Catholics; and two hundred and ninety-six had no connection with any church whatever. Out of a gross population of two thousand, three fourths of the whole were living, within the sound of many a church bell and with abundance of contiguous church accommodation, lost to all the habits and decencies of the christian life. In these families, the number of children capable of attending school was only four hundred and eleven, and of these, two hundred and ninety were growing up untaught. The physical and moral condition of this community was deplorable: one fourth were paupers, on the poor-roll, and one fourth were street beggars, thieves, or prostitutes. When Mr. Tasker, the minister of the West Port, made his first visits to some of the filthiest closes, it was no uncommon thing for him to find from twenty to thirty men, women, and children, huddled together in one putrid dwelling, lying indiscriminately on the floor, waiting the return of the bearer of some well-concocted begging letter or the coming on

of that darkness under which they might sally out, to earn, by fair means or foul, the purchase money of renewed debauchery. Upon one occasion, he entered a tenement with from twelve to twenty apartments, where the parents were all so drunk that they could not hear their own infants crying in vain to them for food. He purchased some bread for the children, and entering a few minutes afterward a neighboring dramshop, he found a half-drunk mother driving a bargain for more whiskey with the very bread which her famishing children should have been eating. He went once to a funeral, and found the assembled company all so drunk around the corpse, that he had to go and beg some sober neighbors to come and carry the corpse to the grave."

The plan of operations laid down by Dr. Chalmers was substantially the same as that in operation in New York and Brooklyn. "The West Port was divided into twenty districts, containing each about twenty families. Over each of these districts a visitor was appointed, whose duty it was to visit once each week, all the families com-

mitted to his care; by all such attention and services as he could offer, to win their good-will — by reading the Scriptures, by distributing tracts, by entering into conversation, and by engaging in prayer — to promote, as fit openings were given him, their spiritual welfare. “A printed slip, drawn up by Dr. Chalmers,<sup>1</sup> was to be left in every house. It was proposed that a school be opened, and the visitors were advised to direct their attention to this subject. A school-room was obtained at the end of the very close down which Burke and his associates decoyed their unconscious victims. “Fronting the den in which those horrid murders were committed, stood an old deserted tannery, whose upper store-loft, approached from without by a flight of projecting wooden stairs, was selected as affording the best accommodation which the neighborhood could supply. Low-roofed and roughly floored, its raw, unplastered walls, pierced at irregular intervals with windows of unshapely form, it had little, either of the scholastic or ecclesiastical in

<sup>1</sup> This admirable document, which is contained in Vol. IV. of Chalmers' Works, ought to be printed as a tract to be used by our visitors.



its aspect; but never was the true work of school and church done better than in that old tannery-loft of the West Port. Dr. Chalmers invited all the inhabitants of the neighborhood to meet him there, on Wednesday the 6th of November. By this time the frequent calls of the visitors had awakened a general curiosity, and the invitation was accepted, the loft presenting a larger assembly of what he called "genuine West-Porters," than had met together for many years. Acting upon the saying of Talleyrand, which he so often quoted, that 'there is nothing formidable in meeting the very lowest of the people, if you only treat them frankly,' Dr. Chalmers told them all that he and his friends meant to do for them, and all that he expected that they would do for themselves."

On the forenoon of Sabbath, December 22, Dr. Chalmers opened the tan-loft for public worship, after several weeks spent in visiting, with only about a dozen adults, mostly old women. But three services were regularly kept up on the Sabbath, and the visiting continued. Rev. Mr. Tasker was employed as preacher. At the close

of the year, the nucleus of a good congregation began to appear. But the place of worship was such as to operate as a great hindrance. Measures were therefore taken to build a house for a school-room and chapel. A library, a savings bank, a washing-house, and a female industrial school, were established.

Dr. Chalmers frequently preached, while they were in the old loft. He addressed several meetings of the inhabitants, to explain the object of these labors. He presided at many of the agents' meetings, and was the central spring which set the machinery in motion. "The very essence of our scheme," he remarked, "lies in the thorough operation of what we call the *territorial* principle. We limit our attention to a single district or locality, itself split into sub-districts, having each a christian agent attached to it; so that there might not be a home or family which might not be frequently and habitually visited by one having the charge of not more, if possible, than twenty households."

On Friday, February 19, 1847, the West Port church was opened for public worship, by Dr.

Chalmers, and on the 25th of April, he presided at the first sacrament. In one month, five sixths of the sittings were let, three fourths of them being from the West Port, a locality which two years before, had not one church-goer in ten of the whole population. Here were one hundred and thirty-two communicants, one hundred of them from the West Port. When the work began, not more than one eighth of the population attended any place of worship. In the new church, three hundred sittings were taken as soon as it was opened. When it began, not one fourth of those capable of education were in school — now, there were three fourths. In five years, there was not a case known of a child of suitable age who was not in school. This result was accomplished by the *district visiting*, and the zeal especially of those ladies. The habit of attendance on public worship, by this time, had become as general and regular in the West Port, as in the best conditioned districts in Edinburgh. It was Dr. Chalmers's conviction that, in the worst localities, the means existed and could be evoked, by which an effective gospel ministry, if once

created, could afterward be sustained; and the history of West Port confirms that conviction. At the end of five years, it supported itself, and contributed seventy pounds for missionary purposes.

The results of the plan, so far as it has been carried into effect, in New York and Brooklyn, are similar to those under the indefatigable administration of Dr. Chalmers. Mr. Pardee has kindly furnished me with the following statement respecting the work in the city of New York:

“MISSION SABBATH SCHOOL EFFORTS AND SYSTEMATIC DISTRICT VISITATION. BY R. G. PARDEE.

“There are, at the present time, in the city of New York, at least 140,000 children and youth, between the ages of five and fifteen years; and of this number not more than from 80,000 to 90,000 can be found connected with any Sabbath schools, Protestant or Roman Catholic. Of the numbers in Sabbath-schools, not more than 45,000 are connected with any church congregation. The remaining 95,000 are dependent almost en-

tirely upon the Sabbath schools for their moral and religious training. And, of that number, at least 50,000 are unreached by existing Sabbath schools.

“For forty-two years, the New York Sunday School Union have been actively engaged in special plans and efforts to reach these destitute children; but the rapid increase of our city population has exceeded all efforts in this direction until within two years past.

“The church schools number almost as many children of the masses as they do of those belonging to their congregations; and we have in New York about 70 Mission Schools, which reach not far from 20,000 children during the year. These mission schools are really branch schools, or out-growths, or children of the church schools, or of the church, or of reliable brethren, connected with our regular church congregations. Independent efforts of erratic persons in our city and in Brooklyn, to gain a living, under professions of much love for the poor children, have for several years been productive of much evil to the cause. Of the 50,000 unreached children in our city, not

more than 15,000 are of Roman Catholic parentage, a part of which can be easily reached, while the remaining 35,000 are roaming in our streets, on the docks, and in the vilest places. Unrestrained and untaught at home, they are their own masters, and do as they list; and they are rapidly training to vagrancy, dissoluteness, and crime. Now they are all within our reach, not through the proclamation of the gospel from the pulpit, but from the close personal contact of christian men and women. Sooner or later, the most untamed, uncontrollable, and outrageous of our city street children are subdued and brought into order and discipline, under the persevering efforts of efficient mission Sabbath school teachers. A cheap process of civilization is here in operation among us. Experience has demonstrated its adaptation and success. Not only are these young vagrants and criminals thus civilized; but, by the blessing of God on this humble instrumentality, they are christianized in great numbers, as the experience of the last few months fully demonstrates. In one mission school, three successive sets of impenitent teachers, numbering

eight, nine, and ten each, have been hopefully converted in as many years, besides a still larger number of children. Every year some of our mission schools grow into churches. Several such cases have occurred during the past year, one of which commenced less than one year ago, and has already grown into a church which numbers one hundred and twenty members. Some of our city churches sustain three and four mission schools, besides their own Sabbath schools; and on each returning communion some of those churches have regularly received additions from their mission schools for several years.

## SYSTEMATIC VISITATION.

“The Missionary Committees of the New York and Brooklyn Sabbath School Unions have made an effort, during the past two years, to systematize the work of christian men and women, so as fully to cover the various portions of our cities. This has been, by the blessing of God, to a great extent successful. A large number of the churches have undertaken the work, and thousands of visit-

ors have heartily entered into it, and prosecuted the same most successfully.

“Such are the changes in our population, by removals and other circumstances, that more than 1,500 teachers and 10,000 scholars are required to be gathered in every year, to fill the vacancies thus occasioned, before making any inroads upon the neglected masses without. And these masses are annually increasing at a rapid rate. In 1820, the population of New York was 123,706; in 1830, 202,580; in 1840, 312,382; in 1850, it had reached 515,304, being an average increase, in the last thirty years, of 62 per cent every ten years. If this increase goes on unchecked, the little boy of five years, now in the infant class, will, if spared to the age of thirty, see a population of two and a half millions. It thus becomes a question of great moment, what we shall do with our little boys five years old. If we imbue their hearts with a love of truth and honor, of justice and religion, they and our country may be safe. If they are now neglected, both may be ruined. More than half of the 140,000 children of our city cannot be found on any given Sabbath, in any of our schools, Pro-



testant or Catholic. The missionary committee saw that no means then in operation could permanently and effectually reach this destitution. They therefore engaged earnestly to devise a plan that would meet the case."

[This was substantially the plan of *systematic visitation*, sketched in the former part of this chapter.]

"After the plan was matured, accepted and proposed to the churches, the *great question* remained — "*Is it feasible?*" "*Will it work?*" For months we waited, with anxious solicitude for any indications of a favorable response to this question. At last the light began to dawn. The pastor of one of our churches, on the 19th of September, 1857, responded to our plan and appealed to his people to carry it out at once. They accepted the service, and immediately laid out into sections the territory around them, and the work commenced. In a few weeks the results were astonishing to all. The Sabbath school teachers and scholars were doubled and even trebled, and the congregation was largely increased, and the whole aspect of things was changed. In rapid succes-

sion, other churches, of various denominations, were applied to to take their sections also; which they unhesitatingly did, with similar results: and, for months, the work went on—none refusing, because “*the people had a mind to work.*” Whole divisions of our city, comprising several wards, have each entered heartily upon this work, and the schools have doubled their pupils; churches have been filled up, and in many instances, precious revivals of religion have followed. We think the providence of God has thus abundantly answered the question, and shown that the *plan is feasible*; that it *will work*.

“About eighty churches in New York and Brooklyn have, within the year past, taken their districts, and not less than four thousand visitors have been engaged in the work; and many thousands of children have been gathered into the Sabbath Schools. One of the churches which entered early and very thoroughly into the movement reports seven hundred and eighty new scholars gathered in during the year, by the visitation. Another reports five hundred. One church obtained

one hundred volunteer visitors at the close of a prayer meeting, and another, ninety.

This systematic working movement has developed a large amount of valuable talent in the churches, which before lay dormant. Men and women before scarcely known, have shown extraordinary aptness and efficiency, and met with great success. Some who entered upon the work with great diffidence and much reluctance, have become pleased with the service and continued it with alacrity and delight. It has, in many instances, changed the character of the prayer and conference meetings, and increased the spirit of harmony and brotherly love. Those who have been at work in a common field of labor, and who return to make their reports and mingle their prayers, soon learn to feel more than a passing interest in each other. It has done much to promote harmony and kind christian feeling between those of different denominations. "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another;" and such christian visits, discreetly and unobtrusively conducted, have been productive of great good.

"This regular systematic visitation carries the

conviction to those who 'care for none of these things,' that there is something real in the plan which so completely covers with a laborious and systematic work all their families and neighborhoods, and conveys the impression that the grand army of the followers of Jesus has arisen, and is about to take possession of the whole land, in the name of their Master.

"As far as it may be deemed expedient, the visitors generally visit both the rich and the poor, neglecting none. And, generally, the visits to the rich have been as gratefully received, and met with as good results, as among the poor. Great caution, however, is always insisted upon. 'For twelve years,' said one lady to the visitor, 'have I resided in this great city, and you are the first christian friend who has spoken to me on the subject, or manifested the least direct personal interest in my spiritual welfare, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart, and beg you will not forsake me.' Whether high or low, rich or poor, it is the saddest of all conditions to be compelled to say or *feel*, 'No man cares for my soul.'

"And now, let me inquire, in the eloquent lan-

guage of the Rev. Dr. Guthrie of Edinburgh, 'Ought not the churches of Christ in this way, to cover the whole out-lying population, even as the prophet with his own body covered the dead body of the child?'

"Rich and poor have alike had their prejudices against Christians and Christianity modified by this benign and heavenly work. But the most glorious results of this work may be seen in the gracious revivals, which, in almost every case have succeeded it. In some of the churches, not a single communion has occurred since the systematic visitation commenced, without additions to those churches from the Sabbath schools. To one church, more additions had been made, in one year, from their Sabbath school than had been added to all the other churches belonging to the same ecclesiastical body in the same time. The wonderful revivals of the past winter could reveal a joyful account in connection with this personal visitation. But it needs not here to be recorded. Every Bible reader knows that it is the divinely appointed way for every one to speak to his neighbors and every one to his brother, saying, "Know

the Lord," until all shall know him, from the least even unto the greatest.

"The plan comprises the following points:—

1. Systematizing the work.
2. Giving to each church its due proportion.
3. Going to the people; not waiting for them to come to us.
4. Covering the entire ground.
5. Giving to every christian church a missionary field at their own door.
6. A convenient field of labor for every church-member.
7. The church the grand training-field for the christian soldier."

#### BROOKLYN.

MISSION SCHOOLS.—I am desirous of presenting this subject in such a manner as not only to show the general results, but the process by which these results are attained. And this I can do in no way so well as to enter into a history somewhat in detail of what has been done. Some of our churches are so located, and are conducted on

such an expensive scale, as to render it scarcely possible to fulfil the Scripture declaration, "the rich and the poor meet together." For instance, in the Third Ward, embracing the Heights, with a population of about 9,000, there are fourteen churches, including one each of the Roman Catholic, Universalist, and Unitarian; and in this population there are very few poor people. Hence these churches, while they embrace a large proportion of the wealth and strength of the city churches, can do very little missionary work, unless they do it in some outside efforts. But there are many churches differently situated, which do much missionary work, and gather into their schools large numbers of children not belonging to their own congregations.

On the other hand, there are large sections of the city, densely populated, and as destitute as this portion is well supplied. For instance, the Second Ward, situated north of Fulton street, and near the river, with a population of about 8,000, has but one church, and that situated on the border of the ward; and one mission school, embracing, in all, but 700 children; a large proportion of

these not belonging to the ward. The Fifth Ward, also, situated east of this and extending to the Navy Yard, and having a population of 16,000, has but one vigorous church, with several small, feeble ones, and three mission schools, embracing about 1,100 children. The people of these two wards are, to a great extent, engaged on the docks; in connection with coal, lumber, and stone-yards; in heavy manufactures, as of iron, brass, copper, white lead, machinery; in distilling and brewing; in the Navy Yard, etc. It is as truly a missionary field as any part of the world. It should be stated, however, that there are several churches on the borders of these wards, which draw to some extent on its population. This is a fair specimen of many parts of the city. The limits of the city of Brooklyn, before the consolidation, which is our present field of labor, extend about six miles north and south, and in the northern part of it, about the same distance east and west. The southern half is from one to three miles east and west. Spread over this territory, in very unequal proportions, dense in some places, and sparse in others, is a population which numbered, in 1855, 139,000,



and probably now reaches 150,000; composed, in some parts, of highly cultivated society, and in others of the most degraded of all classes and conditions, and of almost all nations, from Ireland to Africa, and from Africa to China. The central points of divergence are, Fulton Ferry about a mile south of the Navy Yard, from which five lines of city cars run, every four or five minutes, to as many different points distant from three to five miles; Montague Ferry, half a mile south of Fulton; South Ferry, three quarters of a mile; and Hamilton Ferry, nearly a mile and a half south.

We have no census of our children; but estimating them at one fifth of the entire population, we should have within the limits of the old city of Brooklyn, before the consolidation, 30,000. Of these, 19,000 are reported as belonging to our evangelical schools, which is an increase of 3,000 the past year. There still remain 11,000 not gathered into these schools. But a large proportion of the children of Roman Catholic parents are instructed in the catechisms of their own church, in their own Sabbath schools.

Seeing, as already stated, the utter impracticability of immediately providing churches and ministers for these perishing masses, the value and importance of the Mission Sabbath School, as an agency that can reach them with the Sabbath and an open Bible, is greatly enhanced. It is with this view of the subject, as connected with the evangelizing of our great cities and large towns, that I attach so much importance to the experiments that are being made in this direction, here and in New York. I wish to be distinctly understood as not detracting in the least from the value and importance of church schools. I have heard it intimated more than once, that the true province of the Sabbath school is to instruct the children of the poor; but that, for christian people, it is not needed — that family instruction is better. But I have several strong reasons for repudiating this sentiment. In the first place, it grates harshly upon republican ears, to talk about providing institutions especially *for the poor*. When we establish a Mission Sabbath School, it is not because we would separate the rich and the poor, or provide something for the poor that the rich do not

need ; but because, in consequence of their location and circumstances, we cannot get the people whom we would reach into the churches or the Sabbath schools connected with them. And in the second place, I do not believe for a moment that the Sabbath School is not needed for the members of a christian congregation. I do not believe that it interferes in the slightest degree with parental instruction, but the rather affords increased facilities for it. I have brought up a family of children, and have kept them in the Sabbath school from the time they were old enough to enter till they became teachers. During their childhood, I taught them the Shorter Catechism, and kept up a regular system of family instruction, and never found myself embarrassed, but always aided, by the Sabbath school. And I honestly believe, if the truth were known, that there is more family instruction now imparted by Sabbath school teachers than by any other class of Christians, for the reasons that they are familiar with the juvenile mind, have become accustomed to teaching, and feel its importance. And, if my recollection is worth any thing, there is more family instruction than there

was before Sabbath schools were instituted. But in addition to this, there is the fact that a large proportion of our congregations consist of families whose heads are not professors of religion ; and in those families it is a fair presumption that there cannot be much religious instruction. The Sabbath school is certainly needed for them. Then let us talk of dispensing with church schools, when we are ready to dry up the springs of the Croton River or Cochituate Lake. If we were to dispense with them, it would soon be impossible to get teachers for mission schools.

I proceed now to give a brief history of our Mission Sabbath School operations, entering somewhat into detail, in order to show how the work is done.

1. PRINCE STREET MISSION SCHOOL.—This, so far as I can learn, was the earliest Mission School in Brooklyn, which came to any thing. It was commenced in 1832, when the region where it was situated, about a mile from Fulton Ferry, was an open field, with a few scattered houses, inhabited by poor people. A christian gentleman went out to visit among them ; and finding them anxious for

religious privileges, he opened a Sabbath school. In process of time, as the district filled up with inhabitants, two colonies went out from it, and established other schools, out of which have since grown two churches; and from the Prince Street School itself, in 1847, emerged the Central Presbyterian Church, which worshipped for some time in Willoughby Street, but which has lately erected a commodious house of worship in Schermerhorn Street, between Nevins and Powers, where they have a large congregation and a flourishing Sabbath school. They are doing missionary work, and they have been blessed with repeated revivals, which have brought into the church the flower of their youth, and among them many of the scholars of the old Prince Street school. A gentleman once connected with that school took with him, three years ago, fifteen or twenty of these young converts, and established a new Mission School, which has become a permanent and flourishing school.

2. ORPHAN ASYLUM.—There is a Mission School at the Protestant Orphan Asylum in Cumberland Street, which numbers about one hundred and twenty-five. During the past winter, there has

been a wonderful work of grace in this school. One night, after the little orphans had retired to rest, it was discovered that they were engaged in prayer together. After that, they were encouraged to meet together for prayer, and many of them, it is believed, have become little children in Christ.

3. In 1831, a Mission School was established east of Fulton Street, out of which has grown the Third Presbyterian Church.

4. In 1840 or 1841, a Mission School was established in South Brooklyn, which, in 1842, grew into the South Presbyterian Church (Rev. Dr. Spear's), which has become one of the strongest and most efficient working churches in the city. In 1852, this church established a Mission School, which it still sustains, and which is now maintaining a vigorous and useful existence.

5. BETHEL MISSION. — The Bethel Mission School was established in 1841. It was for many years held in Main Street, near Catherine Ferry, in a building called "The Bethel," designed as a preaching place for sailors. It is now held in a room over the market, about half way between Main and Fulton Streets. The school has been

kept up with great labor and perseverance for seventeen years, and has been a means of blessing to many a soul. It reaches a class who would not be brought under religious influence without it. The school now numbers one hundred and forty scholars, the room being full. Meetings are held in the school-room, Sabbath afternoons. A single incident, connected with it, will show its influence. Some years ago, a lady teacher met a boy in the street, who had been at the school before, and had left it. She endeavored to persuade him to return. He replied that he would do so if she would be his teacher. To this she assented, and he went with her. He continued in her class, was hopefully converted, and made a profession of religion. He has since established a Mission School in Gowanus, which has grown into a Baptist Church.

This school is sustained chiefly by members of the Second Presbyterian Church. It has shared largely in the blessing of God, the winter past, and a number of persons connected with it have united with that church. The field covered by this school is the district for visitation assigned to the Second Presbyterian Church. The plan has

there been very thoroughly carried out, with the best of results.

Some time ago, a little girl about six years of age, belonging to this school, was taken very sick. She requested her parents to send for the Superintendent of the school. When he came, she requested him to sing; and she seemed greatly to enjoy the hymns that she had sung in the Sabbath school. The same request she repeated the second time. But, after that, when she had grown weaker, she requested him to pray with her. A short time before she died, her physician called to see her, and she requested him to pray for her; but he was not a praying man, and declined; but she insisted upon it, till he was compelled to bend over her and repeat the Lord's prayer. The parents had lived in the total neglect of religion; but the circumstances attending her death so affected them, that they were led to attend the meetings at the school-room; and they have since become religious and united with the church. This shows the influence of the Mission School, in reaching down into the lower strata of sunken humanity and raising it up.



6. NAVY MISSION. — This is situated near the Navy Yard, in the midst of the destitute population of the fifth ward. It was established in 1844. It has connected with it a corporate society, organized under the general law for religious societies, which owns a convenient chapel, built early in the history of the enterprise. It is so far from the churches from which it draws its teachers that it always suffers for want of them.

7. CITY PARK MISSION. — This school was first organized in September, 1844, Jasper Corning, Esq., Superintendent. It was commenced in a room on the corner of Nassau Street and Hudson Avenue. It continued, with an average of one hundred scholars and fifteen teachers, till May, 1846, when they were deprived of their room, and, being unable to procure another, it was suspended. Much good was done during this time. The children were not only instructed in the knowledge of Christ, but, in needful cases, fed and clothed.

On the 27th of June, 1848, a reorganization of the school was effected, at a meeting of some of the teachers and friends of the school, who appointed Mr. I. N. Judson Superintendent, and

J. T. Davenport assistant superintendent. It was opened on the first day of July, in the same place as before, with seventeen scholars and six teachers in the morning, and eight teachers and twenty-seven scholars in the afternoon. The increase was gradual, until the school reached one hundred scholars. In a year or two it numbered one hundred and fifty scholars.

In the spring of 1850, the teachers with the help of their friends, purchased a lot of ground and erected thereon a commodious school-room, which will seat, in the principal room, one hundred and eighty, and seventy-five in the infant department. This room has been enlarged the past year, by the addition of a gallery, which has led to a corresponding increase.

The penny collections, taken up in this school, in the morning and afternoon of each Sabbath, amounted, in seven years, to one thousand dollars.

A weekly Teachers' Meeting for prayer and for the study of the lessons, has been kept up with considerable interest; and in the winter, hundreds of comfortable garments have been made up and given to the poor scholars, by the "Sewing Circle" connected with the school.

During the year past, a chapel effort has been sustained, with preaching on the Sabbath, and prayer-meetings during the week. This school has a District for visitation, embracing about a dozen blocks, with over eight hundred families. This is divided into more than forty sub-districts, about three fourths of which have been taken, and pretty thoroughly canvassed. Besides which, the minister in charge has visited most of the families included in these bounds. These labors have recently been blessed. During the winter months, the meetings were of deep interest; and there are a goodly number who trust that they have been brought from darkness to light. A church has been organized, and a number of these converts have been gathered into it. Religion has been thus carried into a number of families where there was none before; and persons who have long lived in the neglect of public worship have been induced by their children to attend the meetings, and thereby have been led to the Saviour.

8. WARREN STREET MISSION. — The neighborhood of the South Ferry had been for a long time the resort of the vicious and abandoned of all na-

tions; but God put it into the hearts of a few brethren, to attempt something in behalf of this moral desolation. "A Sabbath school teacher, broken down in health by incessant labors in New York, had retired to Brooklyn to break away from every association that should tax the enfeebled body or mind. The force of habit, however, was soon found to render a listless ease impossible. It was harder work to rest than to labor. Before the days of the first summer had begun to wane, under the shade of some trees in State Street, the Bible was first read to a group of Irishmen, assembled to smoke and to swear, on Sabbath afternoon. Several heard with deep interest and emotion, what was to them a new aspect of a truth they possibly before had vaguely apprehended, but now understood to be a personal appeal to them on a new theme,—a Saviour's dying love for lost souls,—only to be personally availed of by a faith, which several of them soon felt to be the only ground of their justification. The communication of this new discovery to their wives at home, brought out new forms of threatened persecution. The wives said

they would not only pursue their husbands, but their teacher, with scalding water all over the neighborhood, unless it should cease. The matter was not, however, abandoned till the opposition in the neighborhood had begun to work sad consequences. But the very mothers, who broke up the peace of their households, though willing to appease their consciences and their priest, by making these hostile demonstrations, would yet suffer their children, in many instances, to be readers and learners in a Bible, they would not suffer to come into their houses, though the one read under the tree was their own Douay Bible." It was therefore resolved to establish a Sabbath school. A commodious hall was procured on the corner of Columbia and Amity Streets; and a Sabbath school was opened on the 30th of May, 1847. But before the hour of opening, a company of twenty or thirty suspicious-looking youth were gathered around the building, who, on the opening of the door, rushed in with deafening cries and hideous yells. The minutes of the morning session say: "School opened with — nothing — closed with — nothing. Three teachers and one

visitor met to arrange the benches and get the names of scholars. Two of the teachers went out and brought in thirteen scholars, whose names were registered." " *Afternoon*,—School opened by singing and some remarks. Closed with *noise*. Not much done. Being the first time the scholars met, there was great confusion and noise, so that the school was finally broken up." The succeeding Sabbath, the room was again opened; but owing to the small number of teachers, and the outlandish character of the young men that entered, not much progress was made for several weeks.

Meetings were held by the teachers once a week, to talk over the interests of the enterprise and strengthen each other's resolution. The work was continued with perseverance, and a steady increase of scholars and teachers was the result. On the 16th of September following, a society was organized and a constitution adopted. The teachers' meetings have been continued weekly to the present time, and the school has always maintained two sessions.

The original idea of the founders of this enter-

prise was, not only to instruct the youth in this school, but by going from house to house in the neighborhood, to introduce the word of life into the families, and endeavor to supply their moral wants. With this object in view, as well as that of gathering in scholars, the neighborhood was districted, and a portion assigned to each teacher. That system has been continued to the present time.

A Sewing Society was established by the ladies connected with the school, soon after its formation, to supply clothing to the destitute families and children, which has been of great service to the enterprise, and enabled many to receive instruction in the school, who would not otherwise have been gathered in. About one hundred dollars have been dispensed in this way every year.

At length, as the school increased, it was found necessary to provide better accommodations; and early in 1852, books of subscription were opened for the purpose, and in November following, they were able to enter a commodious chapel, which would hold a school or a congregation of several hundreds.

Up to the time of entering the new house, the expenses of the school averaged about five hundred dollars a year, besides what was expended by the ladies' sewing society.

The new building is held by a society incorporated under a general law authorizing societies to be formed for benevolent and missionary purposes.

Soon after coming into their new house, the society employed Rev. Samuel Baylis as their missionary, and commenced a regular service; and after a little over a year, a church was formed, commencing, in the month of May, 1854, with thirty members.

Since that time, there have been constant accessions, amounting, in all, to one hundred and twenty, only twelve of whom have been by letter. Many of them were Roman Catholics. Most of these, if not all, have been brought in through the Sabbath school. Two adult Bible classes, male and female, have been maintained from the beginning, in which there have been many conversions. A prayer-meeting has been maintained on Sabbath afternoon, a peculiar feature of which



is, the allotment of ten minutes, in the middle of the services, for personal conversation. "The moment the opportunity is given, every christian professor is expected to speak to some one or more impenitent persons in the room, on the subject of personal religion. If there are not impenitent persons enough to engage every professor, they hold christian fellowship with one another. The power of personal conversation, with the divine blessing, has here been demonstrated. Among many other instances, a woman nearly fifty years of age, who was found before the committee for examination, volunteered the testimony that she had lived twenty or thirty years in several christian families in Philadelphia, Buffalo and Brooklyn, but was never spoken to on this subject personally, or waked up to a sense of her danger, until, in the interval for conversation in this meeting, she was exhorted by a member of this church to submit to the terms of salvation, which she hoped she had now done."

The pastor of the Warren Street Mission Church, Rev. S. Baylis, has, at my request, furnished me with the following statement :

“I commenced missionary labor, in connection with this Sabbath school, five years ago. I have held two services on the Sabbath, and sometimes three. I think I can safely say that not less than six or eight hundred different persons have heard the Gospel in our place of worship every year. I do not suppose that more than one out of ten of them would ever have attended even once, had they not been visited *personally* at their dwellings.

“Our mission church has been organized four years. We have received one hundred and twenty members, all but twelve of them by profession. I do not now remember more than three of the one hundred and eight, who ever visited our place of worship once, until they had been visited and urged to attend. Some of the most active members and officers of our church were visited many, *many* times, before they could be persuaded to come even once.

“Many have been reached through the children of the Sabbath school, or by the influence of companions in our adult classes. One fact will serve as an example of many others. One

girl, about sixteen years of age, was induced by another girl who worked with her, to attend an adult class. She soon became personally interested in the Saviour, and united with the church. Through her influence, I gained access to the family. Her mother was a widow with six children, a widowed sister residing with her. They were not accustomed to attend any place of worship. They were induced to attend ours, with a brother of theirs and his family. The brother was not only a neglecter of religion, but a scoffer. In about three months from the time the daughter united with the church, her mother, aunt, and unclé all applied for admission, and were received together into the church. Since that time the unclé's wife, two sisters of the girl first named, and a young man who boarded in the family, have united with the church, making eight persons who have been reached, and we hope saved, through this one person. To God be all the glory."

9. In 1847, some members of the Pierrepont Street Baptist Church established a mission school in South Brooklyn, which has since grown into the

Strong Place Baptist Church, now one of the strongest churches in Brooklyn of that denomination; and that church now supports a mission school and a mission church.

10. GERMAN EVANGELICAL.—This was established in 1848, in the basement of the German church on Schermerhorn Street. It was at first opposed by that church, and the trustees ordered it out of the house. But its conductors refused to go; and after a little while, the people began to see its good fruits, and not only consented that it should remain, but gave it their countenance and approbation. It now numbers over two hundred. This school is composed of Germans, a class for whose spiritual benefit there is great encouragement to labor. They have good intellects, show a ready improvement, and when they receive the truth, it takes a deep and strong hold. The Catholic Germans are less bigoted than almost any other adherents of Rome. But the great difficulty in the way of doing them good, is, their loose views concerning the sanctity of the Sabbath.

11. EAST BROOKLYN MISSION.—In the summer of 1851, the writer, then residing in Bedford Ave-

nue, being pained to see so many children running in the streets on the Sabbath, looked round for some place to open a new school, but for a long time could find none. Towards autumn, he succeeded in engaging a small room in a private house; but when he went there at the time appointed, there was a sick child in the house, and the school could not be held. Seeing a group of girls standing near, who had come to the school, he invited them to his house, and, after showing them the way, went out again, to reconnoitre for more. Seeing a company of boys in the loft of an unfinished building, at play, he accosted them and invited them to go to the Sabbath school. "Come up here," said one of them in a mischievous tone, "and let's have a game." After considerable persuasion, one of them, pointing to his comrade, said, "I'll go, if he will;" and the other replied, "I'll go, if he will." And after some further parley, the whole company started off in procession. The room was full, and it was as much as we could do to take care of them. The most of them were as wild as colts, and many of them acted as if they had never seen a school of any kind before. The

second Sabbath a gentleman came in to assist us. Soon, our room proving insufficient, we removed into a building occupied by a private school. The school was kept up with a good degree of interest through the winter, and a number of teachers came in to assist. In the spring the school was committed to the charge of an excellent superintendent, who has maintained it ever since with vigor and success. They have collected seven hundred dollars and purchased two lots, with the view of building at a convenient time.

This school has been blessed the past winter, and a number of its scholars have united with the church. One of them, a young man, on his examination, attributed his awakening to the Sabbath school. The pastor inquired how he was led to enter the Sabbath school; to which he replied, "You, sir, brought me in." The writer remembers well the circumstance, when the pastor brought into the school two boys whom he had found in the street, between his services, and persuaded them to come to the school. This young man was one of them. "In due time ye shall reap if ye faint not."

12. HOPE MISSION.—Not long after the last named effort was commenced, a retired clergyman, living in East Brooklyn, understanding what had been done, determined to attempt a similar enterprise. He went into a neighborhood called "*Jackson Hollow*," a portion of the city which was neither graded nor paved, in which was a village of shanties, mostly inhabited by Irish families. He obtained the privilege of occupying one of the shanties for a school-room, in which a family resided; and here, without benches or chairs, and with no assistance but that of his daughter, he kept up a school, composed of the rudest materials, yet capable of improvement. But when the warm weather came on, the quarters were too uncomfortable to continue the school, and it was suspended. But the interest created by this effort led to a movement for erecting a building, which resulted in a neat and commodious school-room, at a cost of two thousand dollars, all paid for; and the school continued in a flourishing condition, until recently, the house was burned.

13. MOUNT PROSPECT MISSION.—In the following spring, the writer went, in company with the

superintendent of the school in Clinton Avenue Church, Silas Davenport, Esq., to survey the surrounding desolations. We found a settlement south of Long Island Rail Road, on "Prospect Hill," and about half a mile from the Clinton Avenue Church, containing a population of four or five hundred families, very few of whom were connected with any church. It was believed that there were not more than fifteen or twenty children in the whole settlement, who attended any Sabbath school. We spent several half days in canvassing the neighborhood for a place to open a school, but could find none, not even a single small room, all the tenements being occupied. Not being willing, however, to give it up, I took a bundle of children's tracts, between the services, one Sabbath, and, arriving on the ground, began to distribute them. Soon I had gathered around me an eager crowd. Having exhausted my stock of books, I inquired if they would like to have a Sabbath school? They all said "yes," and "we'll all come." I then pointed to a vacant corner, where there was some shade, and told them if they would come there at six o'clock in



the afternoon we would have a Sabbath school. I then went to the church and found the superintendent just dismissing the school. I told him what I had done, and he invited the teachers to accompany us. After service, we repaired to the spot, and commenced singing. Soon we had about one hundred gathered around us, of all ages and of both sexes. With the exception, however, of one or two young men who had been drinking, they behaved well. We sung and prayed, and had several addresses; after which, we notified them to meet there again the next Sabbath. During the week, we found a garret, in a small building, which we could have, and after opening the school in the open air, we repaired to it; but it was crowded to overflowing, without seats; and all we could do was, to sing, speak a few words to them, and distribute some little books. The next week, we found a couple of lots, on which was a milk barn, twenty-four by forty, which we could purchase for ten hundred and fifty dollars. We ventured to contract for it, though we had no means to pay. The next Saturday, we cast out the rubbish from the barn-floor with our own hands,

and laid down some rough boards for seats. The following day, as the children began to assemble, we led a horse out of the stable, and tied him in the yard; and we could not help thinking that it was an honorable place for a Sabbath school *to be born*. We had about one hundred here, and made some progress in classing them. We subsequently collected money enough to fit up the building, and make a good school-room or chapel. A society was organized under the general law, to hold the property, and what could not be raised was left on a mortgage. The superintendent of the school in the Clinton Avenue Congregational Church, resigned his office there, and accepted the superintendency of the new school. The neighborhood was divided into districts and a thorough system of visitation put in operation. At first we secured the attendance of many Catholics; but they have since built a church of their own in the vicinity, and established a school, and have drawn nearly all of their children away. The school still maintains a vigorous existence. It receives its principal support from the Clinton Avenue Congregational Church; but it has several times

changed superintendents. The neighborhood has been much improved by the school. During the year past, this school has been much blessed. Some months ago, several female scholars asked for the key of the school-room on a week-day afternoon, and were seen to enter and remain two or three hours. Some one asked them what they had been doing so long there; and they replied that they had been praying. "What have you been praying for?" "We have prayed for you, and for each other, and for the school, and for the people in this neighborhood."

The first superintendent of this school, and a gentleman who assisted me in my first school, having removed to Elizabeth City, N. J., have succeeded in forming a Sabbath School Union, and establishing mission schools in that city.

15. SMITH STREET MISSION.—This is in South Brooklyn, and is the one alluded to as having been established by the South Presbyterian Church. It was commenced in 1852. This school is under the care of the church, having been either established or adopted by the session, and a collection is taken up annually in the church to defray

the expenses of this and the church school. An association of young men connected with this church have, for several years, supported a student of the Union Theological Seminary, as a missionary for this school, for the double purpose of gathering children into the school, and of aiding the young man in his education. This measure has proved an efficient means of sustaining the school, and of carrying the gospel to those who do not hear it in our churches. During the past winter, a children's meeting has been maintained on a week-day evening, and attended with much interest; and the blessing of God has been realized in the school.

16. **STRONG PLACE BAPTIST MISSION.**—This school was established by the Strong Place Baptist Church, (South Brooklyn,) near Hamilton Ferry, the same year as the two last named. It now numbers about one hundred and fifty scholars. It has been greatly blessed, and numbers have been gathered into the church from its classes.

17. **MYRTLE AVENUE MISSION.**—In the spring of 1853, we surveyed a field in the central part of the city, north of Myrtle Avenue, but found great

difficulty in procuring a room. At length a hall was obtained on Myrtle Avenue, a number of blocks distant from the field we designed to reach; and with the aid of the missionary employed by the young men of the South Presbyterian Church, we opened a school on the 4th of July, with eight or nine scholars. It being so great a distance from the churches, we found much difficulty in procuring teachers; and without a supply of teachers we could not keep our scholars. We labored hard through the month of July to bring the school up to thirty; and in August, it declined. We met with great discouragement, for want of teachers, and the school ran down to about the same number as at the commencement. About this time, the young men of the First Presbyterian Church formed an association similar to that in the South Presbyterian Church, for the support of a student, with the understanding that he was to visit for this school. But still the old difficulty remained—the want of teachers. An urgent appeal was now made at the Union Concert of Prayer, and to the Young Men's Christian Association, for teachers. These appeals had the effect

to bring a large number of teachers to the school the next Sabbath; but we were in great perplexity, lest, seeing a beggarly set of empty seats, they should go back and report that, after all our ado, there was nothing for them to do. Our visitor felt the difficulty, and went out into the streets and lanes and almost literally "compelled" them to come in. The room was full—the difficulty was over; and from that day, the enterprise went forward. By the middle of winter, it became necessary to hire an additional room.

This school afterwards passed into the hands of the Reformed Dutch Church on the Heights, (Rev. Dr. Bethune's,) and was adopted by their consistory. The place became too strait, and another hall was taken nearer the locality first intended to be reached, at a much higher rent, and fitted up at considerable expense, with a large ante-room for an infant class; the whole being sufficient to accommodate three or four hundred. The attendance soon ran up to two hundred; and it continues in a flourishing condition. The success of this enterprise shows what may be done by persevering efforts, against wind and tide.

18. LEE AVENUE SABBATH SCHOOL.—“The Lee Avenue Sabbath School was organized in May 1853, in a small cottage located in a lane near where the present chapel (Lee Avenue, corner of Hewes Street) stands. There were no houses in the vicinity. For a great distance on every side, open fields, cultivated by market gardeners, met the eye. Nor has the general appearance (excepting a number of paved streets and a few new dwellings) even to the present time, been much changed. The most of the children live from half a mile to a mile and a half away from the chapel, and some even farther. The commencement was a feeble one, consisting of three teachers and eight scholars. The whole enterprise grew slowly for the first two years, numbering only about twenty teachers and eighty scholars. From that time the growth has been very rapid; the whole number now on the register is about fourteen hundred scholars and one hundred and forty teachers, with an average attendance of about one thousand. A very flourishing Reformed Dutch Church, under the pastoral care of the Rev. W. W. Halloway, has grown out of this Sabbath school, and although

the chapel is very large and commodious, it is usually, on the Sabbath, crowded to its utmost capacity.

“The children are very much attached to the school, like to come, and do come in all weathers. The success of the school may be attributed to the system by which everything is carried on; the order maintained; the plan of systematic visitation pursued by the teachers; the correctness with which the Record and all books appertaining to the school are kept.

“The Hymn Book used is a collection published for and under the auspices of the school, to which lively and soul-stirring music is set. The boys hold meetings during the week; and the Sunday school prayer meetings, on Sabbath evenings, are usually attended by one thousand persons.

“A thorough canvass of the neighborhood surrounding the school for the distance of from half to three-quarters of a mile, is always in operation by the teachers. There are thoroughly organized primary and infant departments; making no distinction between the children who do and those who do not belong to the congregation; drawing



no line between the children of affluence and of those in more humble circumstances, but classifying them according to their abilities; not their circumstances in life; believing that "worth," not wealth, makes the man.

"The Sabbath School Benevolent Society supplies its members with religious publications, procures homes for the friendless, provides for the wants of the needy, and assists in burying the dead of the school and society."

For several years, conversions have been frequently occurring in this school, and during the past winter it has shared largely in the general refreshing. They say in their annual report: "There has been no time the year past, that we have not enjoyed, to a greater or less degree, the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit. Many have been awakened, convinced, and converted. At every communion season some from the Sabbath school have been added to the church. We are now sharing with our sister churches in the great religious awakening. Our meetings on the Sabbath and during the week are crowded, and scores are rejoicing in hope."

But, under God, the efficiency and wonderful success of this school has been chiefly owing to the indefatigable efforts of its superintendent, Jeremiah Johnson, Esq., a wealthy gentleman, who has concentrated upon this school, money, talent, and time sufficient to ensure success in any business enterprise. And the result shows what may be done by one wealthy man, who will consecrate his energies and his means to any department of benevolent effort for the advancement of Christ's kingdom.

19. NELSON STREET MISSION.—Near the Penny Bridge, on the way to Greenwood, is a large settlement of foreigners and others, which has received the soubriquet of *Texas*. A mission school was commenced in this neighborhood in 1853. A young man walked two miles on the Sabbath, to attend this school, and spent his money freely upon it. It being far from any church, it was difficult to obtain teachers. A preaching service was, for awhile, sustained in connection with it. In the summer of 1854, it was for a time broken up by the cholera. It was subsequently resumed in a more healthy location. It has been several

times removed, but has at length settled down permanently, in a building fitted up by the Industrial School Society, in Nelson Street, opposite the Catholic Church near the railroad bridge, on the way to Greenwood.

20. MONTAGUE FERRY MISSION.—In 1854, a school was opened in Montague Ferry House, which provides for a population living on Furman Street, below the Heights, mostly employed about the docks. The use of the room is given by the Ferry company.

Up to this time, there was no organized systematic effort to establish and sustain mission schools. It was the spontaneous effort of individuals. There was, however, a growing interest in this subject, from year to year, especially with reference to its bearing upon the evangelization of our emigrant population. A *Sunday School Union* had existed for years; but it contemplated little more than a bond of union among the schools, and made no aggressive movements. But for a year or two, it had been deeply felt that something more was needed. Early in the

year 1855, this organization was given up, and a new one formed, with special reference to the missionary work. It consists of a board of twenty-five managers, chosen annually by the body of the teachers, representing all evangelical denominations. This board has a missionary committee of twelve members, one for each ward, a committee on public meetings, and a committee of ways and means.

Before the new Board had come into working order, and before it possessed sufficient funds to do much, an effort was made to increase the number of schools; and to remove the chief difficulty, an individual undertook to be responsible for the rent of rooms.

21. JOHN STREET MISSION.—Attention was first directed to that moral desolation, the Fifth Ward. After searching in vain several days for a suitable room, an unfinished one was found over a cooper's shop, in John Street, near Bridge Street Ferry; and on four sides of the square in which the building is situated, it was ascertained that there were about four hundred families. This room could be had in its rough state at a rent of one hundred

and fifty dollars. We laid the matter before a gentleman belonging to the Pierrepont Street Baptist Church, a well known friend of Sabbath schools, who took a lease of the building, fitted it up at an expense of two hundred and twenty-five dollars, and undertook to defray all the expenses of the school. When the room was ready, he took about twenty members of his church to the place on Sabbath morning, and after organizing, and electing officers, they went out two and two and canvassed the square in which they were situated, and one side of another, and in the afternoon, they had eighty-nine scholars, but as rude as the "wild boar of the wood." This school has encountered no little difficulty from its distance from the residence of the teachers; but it still flourishes.

22. BOERUM STREET. — Soon after this, a lodge-room was hired in Boerum street, not far from the City Hall, at a rent of one hundred and fifty dollars; and as it was already fitted up, the school commenced before the last named. This school has been sustained chiefly by members of the First Presbyterian Church in Henry Street.

23. BORDER MISSION. — A room was found in

Atlantic Street, adjoining the district occupied by Mount Prospect School, and negotiations were entered into with several parties to take possession of it, but without effect. At length, a gentleman who had been connected with the old Prince Street School undertook the enterprise. He took fifteen or twenty persons from the Central Presbyterian Church, mostly young converts, and after organizing, went out with them to visit the neighborhood. The result was, that, although their field was somewhat limited, they had, in the afternoon, thirty-nine scholars. They soon took the form and appearance of a well ordered school, and have since maintained a vigorous existence. The neighborhood has been much improved since the formation of the school.

24. BETHESDA.—Near the South Ferry, and north of Atlantic street, within the compass of four squares, is a population of about one thousand families, mostly foreigners. In one block of ten houses, there are one hundred families. In another block of two houses, there are forty families. This is the way the people live. This has long been considered the hardest neighborhood in the city. We were

anxious to make the experiment of establishing a school there. But we could find no suitable place. Every block was canvassed, and no room could be found of suitable size. With great reluctance, the project was given up. At length, a rear building was discovered, which had once been used as a ten-pin alley, now made into tenant houses, the upper story of which we rented for one hundred and fifty dollars, and twenty-five dollars more for a passage way. We caused the partitions to be removed, at an expense of one hundred dollars, and the seating and other expenses amounted to one hundred and forty dollars more. This gave us a room twenty-two feet by sixty-two, with an ante-room for an infant class. When the room was ready, we applied to a gentleman belonging to Rev. Dr. Bethune's church, to take charge of it, who brought with him about twenty members of that church, some of whom visited the neighborhood the latter part of the week and on Sabbath morning; and they opened in the afternoon with one hundred scholars. But a vigorous and determined warfare was waged upon the school by the Catholic priest

and those under his influence, and in the course of the summer, it suffered considerable diminution. Since that time it has encountered great opposition and annoyance; but it has been removed to a more commodious room in Atlantic Street, and is now in a flourishing condition. One incident connected with it will serve as a sample of its influence. The day the school was opened, a young girl was in attendance, clad in filthy rags, and appearing in a most squalid condition. She continued to attend, and to manifest indications of improvement. After some time, it was ascertained that she was greatly neglected and abused in the family where she resided. She told her teacher that the man she lived with sometimes called himself her father, and sometimes told her that he had taken her from the almshouse. She did not know whether he was her father or not. But the woman (his second wife) was in the habit of beating and abusing her. She said when she first came to the school, she did not know there was a God. She had never heard his name mentioned, except with a profane oath. She had never heard of a church



or a Sabbath school. She knew nothing of the story of the cross. She learned these things rapidly, and seemed to show a love of the truth, indicative of piety. She has since been taken away from the brutal family with whom she lived, and placed where she will be cared for. This case shows what heathenism there is among us, and how well the mission school is adapted to find out and correct it.

25. VANDERBILT AVENUE MISSION.—This is situated in Vanderbilt Avenue, between Flushing and Park Avenues. An application was made early in the spring of 1855, for the public school-house in this district, with the hope of opening the school-house for Sabbath schools. But our board of education, in their wisdom, twice denied the application, from fear that somehow or other the walls of the school-room might be tainted with sectarianism by the opening of a union school, in which nine different denominations are represented. In July, leave was obtained to occupy, temporarily, an old building in Adelphi Street, which had been used as an oil cloth factory; and five hundred printed notices of the open-

ing of the school were circulated in the neighborhood the latter part of the week. Sabbath afternoon there were sixty-five scholars; the second Sabbath there were one hundred. The school continued to prosper, until the weather growing cold, and it being impossible to warm the place, it was found necessary to make some other provision. Those engaged in the enterprise were persons of slender means, but they succeeded in raising money to purchase a lot and build a house, which they completed early in the season. The school has since continued in a prosperous condition, the blessing of God distilling upon it continually like the gentle dew. The first conversion was one of the boys that had been gathered into the school. This occurred about two years ago. Soon after his conversion, he invited several of his companions to meet with him under a shed for prayer. After some time, they removed to a basement room in a dwelling house. At length they asked and obtained leave to hold their meeting in the school-house. And it has been kept up ever since, increasing in numbers and interest; and at almost every communion in the Reformed

Dutch Church to which the superintendent belongs, young persons from this school have been received into the church.

26. WYTHE AVENUE.—In August, 1855, a member of the missionary committee went over to the north part of Brooklyn, near Williamsburgh, to a needy settlement, and found a room that could be had for a school. It being too distant to be reached by any of the churches in Brooklyn, he stated the case to the pastor of the First Presbyterian church, in Williamsburgh, and asked him if he could furnish us with a superintendent. He replied that it was just the thing they had been talking about, and that they could not only furnish a superintendent, but teachers also. It was just the kind of work in which he wished to engage his people. The school was commenced in September; and it has been in successful operation ever since. The pastor of the church told me a year or more after it was commenced that the enterprise had exerted an excellent influence upon his church. Thus the walls of Jerusalem go up, when the “people have a mind to work.”

Since that time, the work has been going

steadily forward. Several new mission schools have been established, and the old ones have been strengthened and invigorated. And, according to our statistical returns, we have had, in the three years past, an increase of about *five thousand* in the attendance upon our schools.

These schools are generally conducted on the Union principle, embracing teachers of different denominations, and avoiding what is distinctly sectarian. But in most cases it is found that teachers work better together to come mostly from one church, where it is practicable; and it has the further advantage of enlisting the sympathy and securing the support of the church to which its teachers belong.

The facts that I have stated prove the practicability of this work, wherever there is material for it. I think I may safely affirm, that wherever these three things can be found, a mission Sabbath school can be established and sustained, viz. first, a population who need it; second, a suitable room; and third, the right kind of a man to superintend it. The latter must be a man who is willing to become personally responsible for its existence,

and to be the life and soul of it. He must be, in fact, in the good sense of the term, a *driver*. But with this he must unite a genial nature, and the capacity to attach others to himself. Such a man will find no great difficulty in gathering around him a band of kindred spirits for teachers, or of reaching the pockets of his friends when he wants money.

Experience confirms the fact that a mission school, once well established, *becomes an institution*. If in a locality where a church can be gathered, it will in due time ripen into a church. If not, it will become self-sustaining by the local interest it will create among the teachers, their christian friends, and the people for whose benefit it is designed.

There is one other point clearly established by these facts, that where a school or schools are needed, it is not necessary to wait for an organization before proceeding to establish them. If any person has it in his heart to establish a Sabbath school, in any place where there are neglected children, he may safely go forward, and open it, trusting to the coöperation of his fellow

Christians. But first he must have confidence in his own ability, under God, to sustain it after some sort, himself alone, if no one should lend a helping hand. I have seen the experiment tried so often with success that I can speak confidently of its safety. Take an instance or two, encouraging especially to the young :

In 1825 I was residing (a young man and a comparative stranger) in Black Rock, near Buffalo, in New York. This was before the question was decided whether the Erie Canal was to terminate at Black Rock or Buffalo, or which of these places was to be the port of Lake Erie. There was a considerable population, but so much uncertainty being over the future, no permanent institutions of society were thought of. There was an old district school-house, where a Methodist circuit preacher officiated once in two or three weeks, and the alternate weeks the Presbyterian or Episcopal ministers of Buffalo held a third service. But there was no Sabbath school. I noticed the children spending their Sabbaths in the streets, with none to care for their instruction. I thought they might be benefited by being gathered into

a school on the Sabbath. But I knew it would be hazardous to consult any one, lest objections should be made. I counted the cost, and concluded that, as I had some experience in teaching, I could teach a school on the Sabbath myself in case I could get no assistance. I therefore went all over the village one Sabbath morning, and notified all the children that I met, that there would be a Sabbath school at the school-house the next Sabbath morning, at nine o'clock. In the afternoon, there was preaching. I wrote a notice of the school, in which I requested any persons willing to become teachers to remain after service. This notice I handed to the preacher (who was a brother of Ex-President Fillmore), and he was so well pleased with the idea that he changed his text, and preached a stirring Sabbath school sermon, and a large number of persons remained, to signify their readiness to engage as teachers. The following Sabbath a school was opened with eighty scholars. One of the leading men of the place, (not a professor of religion), circulated a subscription and obtained over thirty dollars for a library. A Sabbath school society was formed, and the

school went on prosperously. Three years afterwards I visited it, and found it still in successful operation.

Some years ago, a young lady of my acquaintance went from the East to the state of Missouri, and engaged in teaching. She had a school of young ladies in a village that was destitute of regular preaching, and where there were few, if any, professors of religion. She told her scholars one Saturday, that if they would come to the school-room on the Sabbath, she would teach them the Bible. The next day, to her astonishment, she found not only her own scholars, but many other children, and a number of the parents — some of them men — but none among them could open the school with prayer. But the Bible was opened before them, and in a few weeks the Lord poured out his Spirit, and twenty-five or thirty of them were brought to the knowledge of the truth.

We frequently meet the objection, when speaking of opening a school in a given locality, “Oh, they are all Catholics — you can do nothing with them.” Our invariable answer is, “So much the more need of a school.” We have no more right



to give up these people as hopeless, and make no effort for their salvation, than we have to give up the no less bigoted Hindoo, Mohammedan, or Armenian, and refuse to send the gospel to them. The Catholics are no more wedded to their superstitions than the heathen, to whom we send missionaries across the broad ocean, to speak to them in a language not their own. But the Catholics are among us, and they speak our language, and partake in some degree of the spirit of our institutions. "But do you get them into your schools?" This is a more important inquiry; yet we are able to answer: In some measure we do. I was in one of our mission schools, where there were about one hundred and fifty scholars; and I inquired of the visitor how many of them were Catholics. To which he replied that he did not know; but that, one day, he had counted fifty that he knew were Catholics. However, the priests are very vigilant, and the "Christian brothers" have established both day and Sabbath schools, and the people are *commanded* to send to them. The movement against foreigners has also operated against us. Still, we retain many of them in our schools. The

children, to a great extent, would be glad to attend. And the despotism of the church is losing its hold upon many of the parents, who see that their children are not injured, but made better by our instructions. The Germans, in particular, are both accessible and impressible. We firmly believe that the day is coming when this superstition shall lose its power; and we are bound to employ against it, at every point, the aggressive force of practical Christianity.

But, it should be said, to the credit of the Catholics, that they are more attentive to the outward forms of their religion than the majority of nominal Protestants; and I believe it is a fact that a much larger proportion of their population, than that of Protestant foreigners, are in the habit of attending church, and of sending their children to their own Sabbath schools. And, although so far buried up and perverted by the "traditions of the elders," as, in a great measure to lose its practical force, they still retain underneath all this rubbish the "form of sound words." And, if we expect to do them good, we must avoid every course of action that would lead them to think that we wish

to use any unfair means to proselyte them or their children to the Protestant faith. We must treat them courteously, and allow them the same rights of conscience which we claim for ourselves. And when we secure their confidence, they will listen to candid and fair arguments. We must allow them the same liberty of attempting to convert us, which we claim for ourselves in regard to them. As a good specimen of what I mean, I cannot forbear relating a conversation which recently took place between one of our city missionaries and an intelligent Catholic Irishman. The missionary called at a house where the Irishman was doing a piece of ornamental painting. The lady seemed much interested in the man, and requested the missionary to speak to him. So he went into the apartment where the man was at work, accosted him in a friendly manner, and began to admire his work. "It is wonderful how such effects can be produced. You see, that it is not in the *pot*, it is not in the *paint*, it is not in the *brush*; but it is in *you*." "And, *indade* it is," replied the man, "and I have studied and worked hard to get it." "Well," said the missionary, "there is more in that than you

think.” “Why, indade, sir, an’ what is it?”  
 “You are a catholic, I take it.” “Troth I am.”  
 “Well, we Protestants think that religion is not  
 in the *pope*, nor in the *bishop*, nor in the *priest*,  
 but in the *man*.” “An’ *fath*, it’s true; an’ I’m  
 not more nor half a catholic.” That was enough  
 for one lesson. The mining process was fairly  
 commenced with that man; and it will not be  
 likely to stop there.

SYSTEMATIC VISITATION.

Some attempt was made the year before last, to  
 introduce the systematic visitation; and a number  
 of churches entered into it with spirit. But noth-  
 ing was done towards securing a complete district-  
 ing of the city. But early in the year just past  
 the city was divided into between fifty and sixty  
 districts; and the greater part of the churches  
 have accepted their districts; and many of them  
 have entered into the work most heartily. Where-  
 ever the visiting has been thoroughly and contin-  
 uously done, the results have been cheering. The  
 effect is evidently seen in the unprecedented in-  
 crease of an aggregate of three thousand scholars

in our schools the past year. And if this system can be kept in thorough working order throughout the year, we shall have no people to whom the Gospel will not be regularly carried, and few children who do not attend the Sabbath school. But, in order to secure this, it must be taken up by the churches, under the supervision of the pastors, and carried forward as a part of their appropriate and necessary work. Nor is it necessary only in the districts inhabited by the poor. There are people on Brooklyn Heights and in Fifth Avenue — in all the more wealthy portions of our cities, who live in the habitual neglect of all religion, and of whom it may be said emphatically, “No man careth for their souls.” Yet, they are not inaccessible. And instances are not wanting where a kind and courteous religious visit to such families has been well received, and productive of the happiest results. Some of the most interesting cases of conversion that have occurred during the present revival, have been persons that were brought into the house of God by such visits.

## A CHURCH ORGANIZED FOR LABOR.

The following extract from the farewell sermon of Rev. WILLIAM HOGARTH, to the First Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, on "A Church organized for Labor," is so apposite to this subject, and so forcible, that I have procured it for insertion in these pages :

*"A church should be organized for labor.—* A strong individuality hinders such organizations. There is apt, moreover, to be so jealous a sense of personal independence in the matter of christian labor, that men elect their own places and prosecute their own work without any regard to any organized mode of action. They resent a hint even on their duty to their own church. This fact wars with *organized* christian activity. The power of a division of labor is understood in all the departments of trade and business. It adapts men to the things which they can best do, and furnishes the kind of labor in which they are most successful. It secures results most surely, and most rapidly. This fact you will always see verified in periods of political excitement. 'Organize

and canvass" is the watchword. This covers the whole ground. It is the very thing which the churches need. A local church is fairly expected to look after the religious interests which come within its sphere. It can reach China, or Africa only by prayer and the gift of means and men; but it can come down on the surrounding community with the force of christian example, — with the word of earnest entreaty, and with the open hand of relief for the needy. But if this is left to the miscellaneous impulse of individuals, much of it will be undone. Much of it *is* undone. Each man suspects or hopes that some one is doing the needful labor. A few indeed accomplish all they can in quiet methods, and on the ground of their personal inspection of their field. How many of the christian men and women, filling the churches on these Heights, having sworn at these altars, to serve God, — Christians, too, of rare gifts and abundant resources, — how many of them *have* and occupy a field of christian work? They do christian things in an extemporaneous way, — but I speak of a plan and a place of labor for which they are responsible, and for which they

are HELD responsible by covenant with their brethren. How many such are there? How many Christians are so organized,—are willing to be so organized—and covet it as the best way of gathering a ripe harvest? It is not impracticable to organize after this method,—dividing the field according to the number who are to engage in the work, and appointing each man to the place for which he is fitted. This would secure the two-fold result of occupying the ground, and of giving to each man something to do. You will bear with me when I add that this process will bring into play all the talents of a church. It is not often known how much of various talent there is in a church. Some revival of religion will stimulate anew the christian love, will energize the power of thought,—will intensify the whole life of a man,—and that man will strike out into some department of christian activity with the strength of a “giant filled with new wine.” Men stand amazed at the scope of his attainments, at the versatility of his mind,—at the fitness of his plans, and his executive capacity. There are men of large ability in the marts of



exchange, of genial sympathy in the social circle, who are not known as active christian men. And their names are on the church records. They have no gift, as they say, in the evangelical work. There is more latent and unused talent in the church than is actually employed. More men do little or nothing, than do much. Our young men are excused, or excuse themselves. Our men of business find apology in the pressure of their cares, and in the fatigue which business brings. Others, like Moses, think poorly of their gifts. It is a shame. Any gift, if thoroughly penetrated with Divine love, can be made available. Any style of talent, if devoted to God, He will use for the good of man, and for the glory of his name. And it is high time we took some lessons on this point from some other religious denominations. The power of the lay talent of our Presbyterian churches is not applied as systematically and effectually as it might be. It never will be so applied until there is some plan of organization which puts under contribution every age, and every style of man to be found in the church. The value of such labor will be understood, when

the system which develops it is perfected, and every member of the church is solemnly and *personally* charged with a definite work. It must be put upon his *soul*, without the chance of evasion. It must be put upon his heart with all the encouragement which he needs. It must be put into his hands with the tone of entreaty and with the remonstrance of christian love. What a glory a church would be, in which no man was unemployed,—in which his work was allotted wisely to his care. I am sure the extemporaneous and individual, *unorganized*, mode has been sufficiently tried, and few men are satisfied with it. True, in such a plan, some men may be found weak, incompetent, or extravagant; but the peril from that quarter is not nearly so great as from that *orderly* stagnation which infects the church. The peril from excessive activity is not so dangerous or hazardous as that which comes from life in a charnel house, where talents are buried. A ship is manageable when the wind fills her sails,—but in a dead calm she floats to and fro with the tide, regardless of the rudder. An organized church in the process of actual development has

power to control fanaticism. A church weakened, enervated by inactivity, has no such power, and is always the prey of fanaticism. So we read history.”

The system of christian visitation and mission Sabbath school effort, which we have recommended, if adopted and thoroughly carried out, will produce precisely the *organized church action* here insisted upon, in all our churches, of all denominations. It is equally adapted to churches of every name, and so flexible as to leave denominational action free and unrestricted.

#### THE COUNTRY.

We have seen that the neglect of public worship, and the consequent heathenism are as great, at least, in the country as in the city, if not greater. And, it is no less important in the country than in the city, that the inquiry should come home to every christian heart, “How can these masses be reached?” We believe, as a general thing, there is less attempt made to reach them than there is in the city. It is too common for professing Christians to say, at least in heart,

“Am I my brother’s keeper?” They are content to provide the means of grace for themselves and their households, and to leave others to do the same. And too often the question is looked at rather as it affects the outward prosperity of a religious society, than as it concerns the souls of the people to be reached. And, if a person is not likely to add to the strength of the society, it is considered as of no account whether he is brought in or not. I do not suppose that such sentiments would, in many cases, be expressed, yet they doubtless often lurk within. And they are sometimes openly avowed. A minister was preaching in a country place, where there was a prosperous society, but not a full house; while around them was a large population living in the neglect of religion. He inquired of some of the leading men why they did not make an effort to get the people more generally to attend public worship. The reply was: “We don’t want them. We are well supported and harmonious. *These people would do us no good!*” It needs no argument to show that this was not Christ-like. It was selfish and worldly. Christ came to save

sinner, to lift up the fallen and the lowly. And he did not seek out the *most respectable* people, to build up a rich or genteel society. But, wherever he found a soul, to that soul he preached the Gospel. And, in the commission which he left with his disciples, he did not direct them to go through the world, and select the best people they could find, to build up prosperous and harmonious societies; but to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." The christian people, therefore, in a rural township, are bound by their obligations to their Divine Master, to see that the Gospel is made known to every man, woman, and child in such township.

And how is this to be done? It cannot be done effectually and generally by ministers alone. They may preach faithfully and acceptably the pure Gospel; yet people who have neither an appetite for the Gospel nor the habit of attending upon it will not go to hear it. The Gospel must be carried to their own dwellings. This the minister cannot do alone with sufficient frequency to render it effectual. But the system of effort which has been explained, and which is beginning

to be inaugurated in our cities, is equally well adapted to the country.

I. Let all the evangelical churches in a township or district of country unite, and divide the field between them. Or if all cannot be brought into the arrangement, let those who will, proceed without the rest. And if but one church will enter into it, let that church undertake the work alone. Let every church-member, who is able and willing, take a certain number of families, and visit them regularly at least once a month, and converse and pray with them, seeking the spiritual good of every member of the household. And if any of the people do not attend public worship, or if any children do not attend the Sabbath school, let them be urged to do so.

II. Let a Sabbath school be opened in every district school-house; or if that cannot be done, in some private house in every neighborhood.

III. Let a religious meeting be held at every place where there is a Sabbath school, at least once every Sabbath. Let the ministers preach alternately in these places, as often as their health and engagements will permit. On the alternate days, let

the meetings be sustained by laymen. Let them read and expound the Bible, or discourse to the people on the great truths of religion, to the best of their ability. What they lack in learning and ability, let them make up in fervor and zeal. And they will find themselves growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Scriptures more rapidly than ever before.

These things being done, they will see other results; in neighborhoods remote from the church, there will begin a gradual improvement in morals. The children will grow more respectful, and the rough, wild boys will begin to soften in their manners. The meetings will grow more still and solemn. There will be now and then a hopeful conversion. The christian congregations will gradually increase. New faces will be seen there. There will be additions to the churches from those families which were regarded as hopeless. And thus the way will be gradually prepared for a general revival of religion, which will sweep over the town.

Some years ago, in a country town, two christian brethren were conversing together on the low state

of religion, and one said to the other, "come, let us go to my house and pray together." The other consented, and they spent two hours in prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, till their own souls were thoroughly aroused, and the fire burned in their hearts. As they went out, one said to the other, "Now, what shall we do?" The other replied, "Let us go into this next house, and talk and pray with the people." They did so, and left them in tears. And in this manner they went on from house to house till the day was spent. From that day commenced a work of grace that spread through the town.

There is one difficulty in the way of such a movement, which exists to a much greater extent in the country than in the city. The people know each other. They are familiar with the faults of church-members. And there are often old *fossilized* prejudices, that have come down as *heir-looms*, from father to son. And, in such cases, there is a disposition on the part of those who are urged to attend to religion, to say, "Physician, heal thyself." And this no doubt operates to deter many from the thankless task of speaking to their impenitent



neighbors. I know of but two ways to remove this difficulty; one is, to live so holy, circumspect, and upright a life, as to give no occasion for such a retort; the other is, to seek the speedy settlement of all difficulties that stand between you and your impenitent neighbors. You owe this to yourself, to your neighbor, and to God. For while you live so as to give occasion for reproach, or while you refuse to settle any difficulty, you can neither do any good to other souls, nor get any good to your own, nor advance the cause of Christ.

## CHAPTER V.

### HINTS TO CHRISTIANS ON PERSONAL EFFORT FOR THE CONVERSION OF SOULS.

#### PREPARATION.

THE first requisite for this work is, a *spiritual mind*, that takes hold of unseen things, and views them as living realities. This brings eternity near, and leads to a right estimate of the comparative value of temporal and eternal things. The next thing is, to *get a deep and moving sense of the dishonor done to God, and the contempt cast upon his authority, by the impenitence and unbelief of men.* They are subjects of his government, living at enmity with him, and in open rebellion against his authority. Think how a parent is dishonored by the disobedience of a child. Yet, earthly parents are weak and sinful creatures like their children. How much greater the dishonor cast upon the infinitely holy God, by the disobedience of the creatures of his power. Enter into the feelings of

Christ, and holy men of old, who wept over the sins of the people.

Endeavor also to view the *condition of the impenitent* as it is represented in Scripture. Let it be deep and abiding. See them, in the full blaze of gospel light, rushing down to eternal death, and wearying the patience and forbearance of God, by persistently refusing to accept the salvation he has provided at an infinite expense. Remember the "hole of the pit whence you were digged," and forget not that, but for the free, rich, sovereign grace of God, you would still be in the same condition.

*Enter into the feelings of Christ.* Endeavor to know the "fellowship of his sufferings." Be with him in his fasting and temptation; his extreme poverty; his exhausting labors; his mountain retreats for prayer, during the season devoted by the world to repose. See him everywhere meeting the opposition, malice, and scorn, of the very beings he came to save, yet weeping over their obstinacy and unbelief. Be with him in his agony in the garden; in the cruel lacerations of his body; in his racking pains upon the cross; but above all, in

the double anguish of his soul, while enduring the hidings of his Father's face. Remember that it was his compassion for sinners, which led him to suffer all this. He saw *the whole* of the ruin into which they are fallen. He knew the worth of the soul. He knew the unutterable horrors of "the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched." Endeavor to feel as he felt. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ." "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together." Get your heart deeply imbued with such sentiments and emotions as these, and you will not find it a difficult thing to speak to impenitent sinners, but the word of God will be in your heart, as a *fire shut up in your bones*. Jer. 20: 9.

Think much of the *love of God toward sinners*. Do not think that he delights in the punishment of the wicked. He delights in justice; but he has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked." Their misery is the necessary and unavoidable consequence of sin. At an infinite expense, he has provided a way of deliverance from sin and misery. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-

begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And this wonderful deliverance is freely offered to all: "*Whosoever will*, let him take the water of life freely." "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." And he declares with an oath, "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." While you have fellowship with God, in love for the souls of men, let their conversion be an object of deep, heartfelt, intense desire.

See that you do not entertain any such views of the sovereignty of God as shall practically operate to paralyze your efforts. It is true, according to the Scriptures, that God orders all events according to the counsel of his own will; and among these events is, the conversion of sinners. But he does not do this in any such way as to make it true that it makes no difference what we do. But he does it in perfect consistency with the character of man as a free agent. This is set forth in Peter's address to the Jews: "Him, being delivered, *by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge*

of God, ye have taken, and *by wicked hands*, have crucified and slain." Here the sovereignty of God and the free and responsible agency of the creature are both fully recognized in the same act. If sinners are lost, it is by their own voluntary choice. If they are saved, it is by a voluntary turning from the error of their ways. God has given us a law, which, if obeyed, would make us as happy as the angels in heaven. All men have broken this law, and incurred its penalty, which is eternal death. The Lord Jesus Christ, in his abounding mercy and infinite love, has satisfied the law, and opened the way for the salvation of all, who will accept of it, as a free gift of God's grace. This salvation is freely offered to all: "He that believeth shall be saved;" "*Whosoever will*, let him come and take of the water of life freely." But such is the stubbornness of the natural heart that all, with one accord, reject the offer. If God had left us, with having made the offer of salvation, we should all have perished in our sins. And, if he had so left us, he would have been doubly just; *first*, because of the violation of his law, and *second*, for the rejection of the Gospel. But here is compassion

like a God! He does not thus leave us. He sends his Holy Spirit to incline the heart of the sinner to embrace the salvation so freely provided in the Gospel. But he does not force him to accept it against his will. He makes no miraculous change in the substance of the soul. He operates on the heart of the sinner, through his natural faculties, in such a way that the act produced, is the sinner's own act, just as truly as if the Holy Spirit had not produced it. God thus "works in us *to will* and *to do*, of his good pleasure." The sinner is commanded to repent and believe. God is the author of repentance and faith; yet they are the sinner's own acts; and it is clear that, while he remains inactive, on the ground that he can do nothing, he will never repent and believe. God works in him to produce these very acts; but if he waits, with the plea that he can do nothing, he resists the Spirit of God. If he were disposed to obey the Gospel, there would be nothing in the way of his doing it. God works in him to produce that disposition; and therefore, to wait for a disposition, is to counteract that work. The conversion of sinners is the sovereign act of God; yet

his sovereignty is not exerted arbitrarily nor capriciously, but according to the dictates of his unerring wisdom and the promises of his word. God has appointed certain means to accomplish certain ends. He has declared that the conversion of sinners is agreeable to his will. But this he has appointed to be accomplished through the instrumentality of his word, and by the agency of his Spirit. He has committed his word to his people and promised to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask. Our work, then, is, to lay divine truth upon the sinner's conscience, and ask God for his Holy Spirit to make it effectual to their salvation. If God did not convert sinners by his sovereign grace, independent of anything in them, we might despair of their conversion; for, if left to themselves they would go on to destruction. But the fact that God does interpose by his grace, to "pluck them as brands from the burning," encourages us to labor and pray for them. And when we persuade them to repent and believe, we coöperate with the Spirit of God in his work. And we may address them as free agents, assuming, as the



Scriptures do, that what is required of them is a practicable thing to be done.

*Be prepared to give proper directions to inquirers.* Let not the trumpet give an uncertain sound. Do not talk so much and to so little point as to confuse their minds. In the first place, you must have a clear apprehension of what it is to become a Christian. It is not enough that you have yourself experienced the great change called being "born again." You must have clear views of what constitutes that change. It will not do to take your own experience as a standard, because the imperfection of human nature and defective instruction often mingle with and mar the experience of good men. You must take the Scriptures as your guide. It is a sad thing to direct a man in the wrong road upon a journey, on which his temporal interests are depending; how much more, his eternal interests. In this matter, there is but one safe rule: and that is, to give no direction, which, if followed, will not save the soul. We have two scriptural examples, which furnish a perfect guide. On the day of Pentecost, Peter answered the inquiry of those who were "pricked in

their hearts," and cried out "men and brethren, what shall we do?" And we have the answer of Paul to the awakened jailer. These answers embrace substantially the same thing; and no one can follow the directions here given without being saved. But, in order to bring to the test some things that are often said to inquirers, I will mention a few things which the apostles *did not say*, in answer to these inquiries:

1. *They did not tell those who made these inquiries, that they must lead a moral life.* Why not? Is not a moral life a good thing? Yes; but it comes entirely short of God's requirements of a sinner. It will not atone for one transgression; nor, by reason of its imperfection, will it answer the present demands of the law. It was on this ground that the moral young man was sent away from Christ "sorrowful."

2. *They did not tell them: "Do as well as you can."* "I do as well as I can, and what more can be required of me?" is often heard from the lips of impenitent men. But the Word of God says, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in

all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.”

3. *The apostles did not tell them to be serious, and think about religion.* A man may be serious and think about religion all his days, and not be saved. I knew a middle-aged man in my native town, who was serious-minded, regular in his habits, careful of his conduct, and always in his place at church. Twenty years afterwards I visited the place, and he was an old, gray-headed man. I asked him how it was with his soul; and found that he stood just where he did twenty years before; and I have never yet heard of any change in him, and it is now more than twenty years since my last conversation with him.

4. *The apostles did not say, “You have not conviction enough—you must get more feeling.”* The wicked on the left hand will have awful convictions at the judgment, but they will not be saved. Salvation cannot be purchased with *feeling*. Esau felt deeply, but found no place of repentance. Judas felt most intensely, *and went and hanged himself*. There is no merit in *feeling*, and many make of it a self-righteousness.

5. *The apostles did not tell inquirers to reform their lives, and prepare themselves for coming to Christ and being converted.* No reformation can be genuine till we come to Christ, “for without faith it is impossible to please God.” No preparation is needed for coming to Christ. None can be made by an impenitent sinner. He must come as he is. Still, it is true that no one will come, till he is ready to forsake his sins.

6. *They did not tell inquirers to read the Bible, pray, and go to church.* Why? Are not these indispensable duties? Yes; duties they are for all; but there is no merit in them, nor any saving efficacy. A venerable minister in the West, now in glory, used to relate the following incident with bitter tears: “In my early ministry, a woman came to me to inquire what she should do to be saved. I told her to go home and read the Bible and pray, be careful of her conduct, and attend upon all the means of grace. Some time after, I saw her, and inquired if she had followed my directions. She said she had, and she felt better. But she had settled down into a state of careless security, from which I could never awaken her. I felt

that I had murdered her soul; and I determined from that day forward, that I would never again give a direction to an inquiring sinner, which, if followed, would not save his soul."

Neither Peter nor Paul nor Silas said any of these things to those who inquired of them what they should do to be saved. Why not? All these things are good. No man can be a Christian who does not lead a moral life; aim at doing as well as he can; be serious and think of religion; feel appropriate emotion in view of truth; and attend upon the means of grace. But one may do all these things, after the carnal mind, and for selfish purposes, without being a Christian.

But, the directions given by the apostles were simple and direct. No man can mistake their import. Peter said, "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;" and Paul and Silas said to the awakened jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Both these directions embrace substantially the same thing. No one could follow these directions without being saved. And

any directions which do not agree with these will peril the soul of an inquirer. Those to whom these directions were given immediately followed them, and immediately found peace. But an awakened person may be greatly in the dark as to what repentance and faith are, and how he can exercise them; and on these points, you are to do all you can to enlighten him. But after you have done all, you must rely on the Holy Spirit to teach him.

*Banish from your mind all imaginary difficulties.* Satan and your sluggish heart will always magnify the obstacles in the way of this duty. Mole-hills will appear like mountains. But these obstacles are more imaginary than real. The impenitent are not so unwilling to converse on this subject as many suppose; and often they are anxious for the opportunity of opening their minds, and wonder why Christians do not speak to them in relation to their eternal interests. Let any Christian look back upon his own experience, previous to his conversion, and he will doubtless recollect the time when he felt thus. I have conversed with many hundreds, in almost every vari-

ety of states of mind, not excepting avowed infidels, but have rarely met with one who did not receive it kindly, and treat me with courtesy.

*Form a deliberate, firm, and unshaken purpose* to enter into this work heartily, with a *determination and actual intention*, in reliance upon the Divine blessing, to convert souls. "He which converteth a sinner from the error of his ways," says the apostle James, "shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins." "Others save with fear," says Jude, "*pulling them out of the fire.*" "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee." From these passages, it appears scriptural to speak of Christians converting souls. Though we cannot convert them by our own power, yet we have such promise of God's coöperation that we may calculate upon their conversion, with the faithful use of means, almost as certainly as we can calculate upon a harvest by sowing the seed and cultivating the plants. There will be some failures; but in general it is true that "seed-time and harvest shall not fail." Do not, therefore, go about this work in a faint-hearted spirit, as though you

had no prospect of success; but undertake it with the confident expectation of God's blessing.

*Cherish a deep and abiding sense of your dependence upon the Spirit of God, as the author of a right spirit in yourself and of success with others.* Without his gracious work upon the hearts of sinners, all your efforts for their salvation will be vain. If you go about the work relying upon your own strength, you will utterly fail. God will not encourage a self-confident, self-seeking spirit, in his children. "*I can do all things,*" says the apostle Paul, "through Christ which strengtheneth me." A sense of your dependence will have a tendency to keep you humble. It will enable you to see your own impotence—cause you to be importunate in prayer, and to give all the glory of your success to God. The labors of such a spirit God will bless.

*Endeavor to qualify yourself for meeting all the varied forms in which the depravity of the human heart manifests itself.* You will find some persons in a state of *extreme ignorance* of the simplest truths of the Gospel; others will agree to every thing you say, and yet leave the painful



conviction upon your mind that *they do not even make an effort to understand it*; some are resting upon *fatal errors*; others are entangled with *real difficulties*; and others still are prepared with numberless objections, merely for the sake of *trifling*, and getting rid of importunity. You will also find so many persons resting upon *false grounds of confidence*, that it is almost impossible to approach their consciences; others will endeavor to *deceive* you, by representing their spiritual condition more favorably than they really think it to be; some will be found making ill-directed efforts to *prepare themselves* for becoming religious, and resting upon these efforts; some persons will converse freely, and yet treat your exhortations with *marked neglect*; and from others, perhaps, you may meet with *open resentment*. All these various cases require different modes of treatment. The word of God, which is the Christian's armor, is abundantly furnished with weapons adapted to every emergency. Study it diligently, for the purpose of arming yourself for the warfare. Read also the works of judicious writers, who have had extensive experience with awakened sinners.

From them you may gather many useful hints to aid you in this work. And foremost among these, I would recommend the "Pastor's Sketches," by Rev. Dr. Spencer. The memoirs of Harlan Page, Thomas Cranfield, and Alexander Peterson, also furnish examples of the work carried out in action.

*Be much in prayer.* This will be the great secret of your success. Meditate much upon the amazing promises of God in relation to prayer. Exercise strong and unshaken confidence in these promises. Try their reality, by actually putting forth the prayer of faith for the conversion of sinners. *Spend much time in prayer.* All obstacles melt away before the spirit of prayer. There is, as it were, a *heavenly atmosphere* about a man of prayer which fills even opposers with awe. Before you go out to converse with the impenitent, *first* visit your closet, and obtain evidence in your own soul of the presence of God to go with you. Much depends upon this; for if the Spirit of God does not go with you, your labor will be lost. However, do not make your want of feeling an excuse for neglecting the duty. Your soul may be blest in the very act of discharging it.

It is related of Rev. Dr. Nettleton that, when a young man engaged in teaching a school, he went to the minister of the place almost in despair, having given up his hope and concluded that he was in an impenitent state. After ascertaining his state of mind, the minister advised him to go back to his school and labor for the salvation of his pupils. He did so, and soon found some of them awakened. A revival followed. His doubts and troubles of mind left him, and never returned.

## HOW TO DEAL WITH SOULS.

1. *Survey your field of operations*, so as to bring your general sense of obligation to bear upon particular persons. Religion is a *personal* concern—it affects men as *individuals*; and your efforts must be made to bear upon them as such. The ignorance, sin, daring impiety, thoughtless levity, and amazing stupidity which every where stare you in the face, when you survey your field of labor, should stir up your heart, and excite the deepest emotion. But do not rest satisfied with this general feeling. Ask, “what sinners is it *my* duty to convert?”

2. Study the character of the individuals whom you have selected as the objects of your efforts, and determine what means are best adapted to their case.

3. Go to the work in a spirit of simple and humble dependence upon God, but with the *expectation of success*. You will honor God by a strong confidence in the efficacy of his Word and Spirit, and by an unwavering faith in his grace and promises. "Be strong in the Lord." This will make you as bold as a lion. It will inspire you with a courage and patience which no obstacles can daunt, and no opposition overcome. It will enable you to say with the Psalmist, "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. "The God of Israel is the strength of his people."

4. Improve the *most favorable opportunities* for conversing with the impenitent. "A word spoken in due season, how good is it!"<sup>1</sup> It is generally advisable to converse with them at those hours when they are least encumbered with business. When the mind is burdened with care, and the chilling interest of worldly pursuits exert full

<sup>1</sup> Prov. 15: 23.

power, it is very difficult to reach the conscience. Yet do not carry this so far as to neglect opportunities for doing good, through excessive fear of doing harm.

5. Maintain a *tender, melting spirit*. This was the feeling of the apostle Paul.—“I have *great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart*—for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh.”<sup>1</sup> “By the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one *day and night, with tears.*”<sup>2</sup> “Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with *many tears.*”<sup>3</sup> “For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you *even weeping*, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ.”<sup>4</sup> Such a spirit as this might melt a heart which would be provoked to opposition by a *harsh, imperious manner*. The late Rev. Joseph W. Barr, in relating his religious experience, speaks of the labors of a devoted deacon for his conversion. When the deacon began to address him on the subject of his salvation, he says, “my heart began to rise with bitterness never known before. I reproached him, pointed him to incon-

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 9: 2, 3. <sup>2</sup> Acts 20: 31. <sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. 2: 4. <sup>4</sup> Phil. 3: 18.

sistencies in the church, raved like a madman, and while my conscience was grinding me like a millstone, I still kept pouring out my invectives. He bore it with meekness, — perfectly unmoved; and by his gentleness held up a shield which made every dart I threw recoil upon myself. His christian meekness was too much for me. I rose up and left him. If he had only given one retort, shown one angry feeling, it would have relieved me; but no, I could find no handle. I went out into a wood smarting under the wounds which I had been giving myself; and when I could stand under it no longer, returned, told the deacon my situation, asked his pardon, and begged his prayers. Truly, as Henry Martyn beautifully says, ‘the power of gentleness is irresistible.’” Approach the impenitent, not in the assuming attitude of a teacher, but with the kind and tender exhortation of a friend and brother. Let even the *tone of your voice* indicate both your low estimate of yourself and the tender regard you feel for their souls. Even the same words which would provoke anger and opposition, when spoken in a loud and bold strain, might touch the heart,

if advanced in a modest *under-tone*. “A soft answer turneth away wrath.”<sup>1</sup> “A word *fitly spoken* is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.”<sup>2</sup>

6. *First* ascertain, by kind and familiar inquiries, the *present spiritual condition* of the person with whom you converse: his knowledge of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and feelings and determinations in relation to the interests of his soul. For introducing your subject, no better course can be recommended than to follow the example of our Saviour. He improved every opportunity for drawing out serious reflections from the most common occurrences of life. By the replies made to these reflections, you can form some estimate of the state of feeling. If you discover any appearance of tenderness, you may safely proceed with faithful, affectionate, direct personal questions. But, if great insensibility is manifest, send up your heart to God for direction, while you use that “wisdom which is profitable to direct.” The insensibility only shows, that there is the greater necessity, that, by some means,

<sup>1</sup> Prov. 15: 1. <sup>2</sup> Prov. 25: 11.

the power of the Gospel should be brought to his heart. By unnecessary abruptness, in cases of this kind, you may defeat your object.

7. Try to persuade him to fix his attention on the truth, with a determination to obey it *now*; and to give up everything which has a tendency to divert his attention from the great concern of his soul's salvation. Earnestly exhort him to break off all those connections and pursuits which tend to dissipate serious thought, and to bring himself thoroughly under those influences which tend to deepen the impression of the truth upon his heart.

8. If the individual with whom you are conversing is *ignorant of the fundamental* doctrines of Christianity, endeavor to explain to him, in as simple and brief a manner as possible, those great truths which it is necessary for him to believe, in order to become a Christian. Acquaint him with his true condition, as a lost and ruined sinner, and point out the only way of salvation through Christ. Try to make him understand the nature of true conversion.

9. By no means enter into *general and irrelevant*



*discussions.* This would defeat your whole purpose, by turning off the attention of the sinner from the consideration of his own personal state before God. Endeavor, in the most direct manner possible, to get at the *conscience*. This is generally a most difficult matter. You will often find every avenue of approach most strictly guarded and most courageously defended. Your attention will be diverted by speculations upon doctrine; by scattered conversation about the inconsistent conduct of professors; the externals of religion; or something else entirely foreign to the personal interests of the individual. But do not suffer yourself to be drawn into an argument upon any of these matters. Ply the truth to his conscience, to make him feel that his controversy is with God. "For every man shall bear his own burden."<sup>1</sup> "Every one shall give account of himself unto God."<sup>2</sup> Be especially careful that you do not make yourself the offended party, and treat him as if he had injured you. Convince him that *he himself* is a lost sinner, already sentenced by the word of God, and every moment exposed to the

<sup>1</sup> Gal. 6: 15. <sup>2</sup> Rom. 14: 12.

agonies of eternal death. Show him his absolute need of a Saviour. Press upon him the duty of immediate repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; and the danger and guilt of every moment's delay. Show him that every moment while he rejects the salvation offered in the Gospel, he is committing a new act of aggravated rebellion against God. Strive to bring him to a solemn pause, and to a determination to put off this great work no longer. Show him that he is an enemy to God; and that he can do nothing pleasing in his sight, till he ceases his rebellion and opposition to his government, by repentance and unconditional submission. Yet, show him that he is under the most solemn obligation, not only to pray, but to perform every christian duty; and that his impenitence and unbelief do not in the least release him from this obligation. Endeavor to remove the impression that a long season of distress must necessarily precede conversion; or that the work requires a series of protracted efforts. On the day of Pentecost three thousand were converted in a few hours; and the jailer believed and was baptized, *rejoicing* with all his house, *the*

*same hour* that he was brought under the influence of the truth. Show him that his only hope is in Christ; and that he can do nothing to recommend himself to the favor of God. He must come as a sinner, acknowledging the justice of God in his condemnation, and cast himself upon His mere grace, through the atoning blood of Christ. He can make himself no better. Staying away from Christ to get more conviction or feeling (instead of coming to Christ as he commands) is sin, and only aggravates his guilt. Whatever may be his anxiety, his prayers, or his tears, he is continually unreconciled to God, so long as he refuses to accept of Christ, the only meritorious cause of salvation.

10. Unconverted persons often have *some particular idol*—some one object upon which their affections mainly centre. If possible, ascertain *what* this is. You will frequently meet with persons, who say they wish to be Christians; that they love Christ, and are willing to give him their hearts. With such your first object should be to convince them that they are *deceived* in supposing they wish to become Christians. Until this is

done, it is impossible to approach their consciences. The most effectual way to accomplish this, is to explain to them what is meant by "forsaking all" for Christ;<sup>1</sup> and then proceed to inquire whether they are willing to give up this or that object, until you discover the darling idol of their hearts. Then bend all your energies to that point. If you can persuade them to give up their favorite sin, they may soon make an entire surrender of everything else.

11. You will find many sinners, under some degree of serious impression, who acknowledge that they are not "*altogether*" Christians; and yet seem to think they are in a fair way to become such. They are resting upon their anxiety; their regular attendance upon the means of grace; and upon trying, as they say, to "*do as well as they can.*" They think if they persevere in this course of *seeking*, they shall so far *gain the favor* of God, that he will convert their souls. Show them that God will have no neutrals in his kingdom; that every man is either the friend or the enemy of God. "He that is not with me is against me."

<sup>1</sup> Luke 14: 33.

To meet this self-righteous spirit, show them the holiness and spirituality of God's law; that a single transgression is an act of rebellion against his government; and that, while they pretend to be *doing as well as they can*, they are resisting the claims of God. They are trying to seek his favor, while they persevere in rejecting the only offer of mercy which he can make, consistently with the holiness and rectitude of his character. God abhors their unholy performances, while their rebellious hearts refuse to surrender, and accept of pardon and life on *His* own and only terms.

12. If circumstances *do not forbid it*, pray with the individual with whom you have been conversing, before you leave him. Nothing is better calculated to soften the heart of an impenitent sinner, than a direct appeal to the throne of grace in his behalf; and if you do really offer up the prayer of faith, you may hope the Holy Spirit will descend upon him *while you are yet speaking*. If there is much evidence of serious impression, it may be proper, after you have prayed for him, and before you rise from your knees, to call on him to pray, and to surrender his heart to God *immediately*.

Although he can perform no acceptable service while he continues in rebellion against God, yet it is in the attitude of prayer that he must cease his rebellion, surrender himself unconditionally to the government of God, and look to the blood of Christ, as the only hope of pardon.

13. Keep a supply of *tracts appropriate* to the various circumstances of sinners; and leave with the person with whom you have been conversing one adapted to his case. This is of great importance; as the reading of it will tend to fix upon his mind the impression your conversation may have made, and lead him to compare it with the word of God.

14. When you have called up the attention of the sinner to a serious concern for the salvation of his soul, he is brought into a *perilous condition*. In no circumstances can the unconverted commit such aggravated sin, or engage in such high-handed rebellion against God, as when under the strivings of the Holy Spirit. Their situation is one of most imminent danger. On the one hand, they are exposed to the delusions of a *false hope*; on the other, they are in danger of *grieving* the

Holy Spirit, and *sealing* their own condemnation. When, therefore, you have been the instrument of bringing the sinner into this perilous condition, you are under the most solemn obligation, if he still remains within your reach, to *follow up* your efforts. When you have faithfully performed the duties already mentioned, leave him till he has had time for serious reflection, and deliberate action. But do not leave him too long, lest his impressions should wear off for want of the continued application of the truth to his conscience, or lest temptations should beset his mind, which your kind counsel might remove. Bear him continually upon your mind, and make him a subject of daily prayer in your closet. Agonize at the throne of grace for his soul. Take fast hold of the promises made to prayer; and let not your faith and supplications fail till you obtain the blessing. Repeat your visits from time to time, till you know the result. He is now in the condition of a sick person, whose disease is approaching the crisis. Watch over him as you would over your sick child, whose case is hanging between life and death.

15. Before repeating your visits, consider, in a prayerful manner, in what state of mind you left the individual with whom you have been laboring, and in what form the opposition of his heart to God was manifesting itself. And study how you can meet his objections, remove his difficulties, and drive him from his false refuges. This will enable you to act with promptness, and perhaps prevent you from being foiled.

## CAUTIONS.

1. Avoid producing the impression upon the mind of the sinner that his present condition is *his misfortune*, rather than his *guilt*. This is often done by injudicious expressions of pity. While you approach him with all the tenderness of a heart tremblingly alive to his situation, yet maintain the honor of God. The lost and ruined condition of the sinner is the result of his wilful and determined rebellion against his Maker. Show him that God's justice would shine with unclouded splendor in his eternal punishment. He has deliberately and wilfully transgressed God's holy



law, rejected every offer of mercy, and obstinately resisted the Holy Ghost. If he goes down to eternal death, it will be of his own free will and deliberate choice. Sinners are disposed to throw the blame of their situation upon God, while he declares with emphasis, that "*they have destroyed themselves.*" Let everything in your conversation be calculated to justify God and condemn the sinner—to show him that God is *right* and he is *wrong*. "Let God be true and every man a liar."

2. Do *not* think you have accomplished your object by engaging in *general and vague conversation about the importance of religion, etc.* There are many things of this nature concerning which the sinner will agree with you; and you may leave him, after an hour's conversation of this kind, with the self-complacent feeling that he is "not far from the kingdom of Heaven." Especially avoid any common-place remarks just as you are about to leave him, after a serious attempt to reach his conscience. Every such thing tends to dissipate serious impressions. "Then cometh the enemy, and catcheth away that which was sown."

3 Be very *cautious in speaking to others* about

the conversation you have had with individuals. Never do it unless some good end can plainly be accomplished by it. Do not mention it before unconverted persons, or in the presence of professors of religion who manifest little interest in the conversion of sinners. "Your good will be evil spoken of."<sup>1</sup> Do not speak of it for the gratification of idle curiosity, or gossiping egotism, or in an irreverent manner.

4. Be cautious that nothing in your own conduct may tend to neutralize the effect of your conversation. "Nothing strikes such a deadly chill over the minds of those who are beginning to feel deeply the realities of eternity, as a light, worldly, or irreligious deportment in" professors of religion, and especially "those who at other times have used great apparent earnestness in urging them to flee from the wrath to come."<sup>2</sup> The author can testify to the truth of this remark, from painful experience, which had well nigh cost him his soul. This is one of the most fearful weapons which Satan wields in his contest with the awakened sinner, to destroy his confidence

<sup>1</sup> Romans 14: 16.

<sup>2</sup> Hints to Christians, p. 58.

in the reality of experimental religion. If the sinner you are laboring to convert, witnesses in your own conduct the exhibition of selfishness, vanity, pride, censoriousness, frivolity, artfulness, bitterness, envy, jealousy, or any other of the "works of the flesh," your most earnest professions can never convince him of your sincerity; and if he does not settle down upon the belief that *heart religion* is all a delusion, he will certainly come to the conclusion that *you* do not possess it; and thus your influence with him will be lost.

5. Be very *careful* in your conversation with those who *profess to have recently experienced a change of heart*. "The heart is *deceitful, above all things;*" and the number of apparently *dead* professors in the church shows that persons *may be* deceived in relation to their supposed conversion. Instead of assuming at once that they are truly born again, as they hope, give them instruction adapted to their case, to search their hearts, and lead them to a sole dependence upon Christ, and leave time to test the question of the genuineness of their conversion.

But on the other hand, do not treat them in such a way as to beat them back into a state of despondency and doubt, which may mar their christian experience and hinder their usefulness for years. Lead them the rather into the performance of those duties, and to that course of christian activity, which are the natural and necessary fruits of true christian experience.

Persons of different temperament require different treatment. The bold and self-confident need caution and heart-searching; while the diffident and self-distrustful require encouragement.

6. See that you make use of no other means *of exciting the feelings* of sinners than THE TRUTH. Let this be presented in all its most interesting, soul-stirring, awakening power. There is no danger of undue excitement, *in view of the truth*. Its solemn realities are calculated to rouse every faculty of the soul. But any religious feeling which is not produced by the truth, made effectual by the Holy Spirit, is not genuine. It is *through the truth* that the Spirit of God operates in the conversion and sanctification of souls. "Of his own will begat he us, *with the word of truth.*"

“Seeing ye have purified your souls, *in obeying the truth through the Spirit.*” “Being born again *by the Word of God.*” “Sanctify them *through thy truth.*” But there is a kind of indefinite religious feeling which many mistake for christian experience. They *feel*, and perhaps deeply; but they know not *why* they feel. This is a delusion of the enemy of souls. By persuading them to rest upon this SPURIOUS *religious feeling*, he as surely accomplishes their destruction as if he had kept them in carnal security. The fearful effects of this evil may sometimes be seen in religious excitements, where the truth is but indistinctly held up before the minds of the people. There are doubtless thousands in the church, who at times may be deeply moved with this indefinite kind of feeling, who yet cannot *give a reason of the hope that is in them.* The clearer our views of truth are, the more spiritual and holy will be our religious affections. What an awful responsibility rests upon those who deal with immortal souls!

## CHAPTER VI.

### REFLEX INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL EFFORT FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS.

NEVER had the saying of Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," a richer verification than in the case of those who put forth self denying labors to save the souls of their fellow-men. The author can testify to this from his own experience. Ever since making a christian profession, he has always acted on the principle of foregoing religious privileges himself, if thereby he might extend them to others. And he has always found these labors more profitable to his own soul than sitting to drink in instruction from others. In missionary labors, such a principle is indispensable. A teacher in a mission Sabbath school who attempts to attend upon all the services of the church to which he belongs, will either neglect his work, or wear himself out with excessive labor. But if all Christians, who

are capable of doing it, would devote the afternoon of the Sabbath to missionary efforts, and forego their second sermon, they would find the proverb true, "He that watereth shall be watered also himself." I am heartily glad to be able to quote, in favor of this opinion, which I have long entertained, so good an authority as that of Rev. Dr. Thomas Guthrie, of Edinburgh. In his work on "*The City, its Sins and its Sorrows*," he says: "Why should not some, who now, on Sabbath days, enjoy two services in the house of God, content themselves with one, and at the time of the other, go forth to *give* what they have *received*? The bread would multiply in their hands." By this means, the busiest man might find time to visit his district; and the great obstacle in the way of supplying mission Sabbath schools with teachers would be removed. And I am sure this service would tend more to their growth in grace, yea, and in knowledge too, than devoting all the hours of the Sabbath to the passive reception of instruction. Such a course would give time for the inward digestion of the truth; and the necessity of reproducing it, in order

to distribute it to others, would deepen the impression, and fix it indelibly upon their minds. Cecil says, "A contemplative life has more the *appearance* of a life of piety than any other. But it is the divine plan to bring faith into activity and exercise. We choose that sort of walk which we like best: if we love quiet, we are for sedentary piety; but the design of God is, to root us out of everything and bring us into more useful stations."

Missionary effort is the best means of quickening and developing individual piety. The christian graces, in their growth, follow the analogy of nature, which everywhere exhibits one universal law, that STRENGTH IS INCREASED BY EXERCISE. Why is the oak that grows in the open field stronger than the one that grows in the forest? Not because it has a richer soil, but because, from the time it was a tender twig, it has been exposed to the fury of the winds, whose incessant blasts have given it a firmer root, a stronger trunk, and more vigorous branches. And why is the arm that wields the axe or the hammer stronger than the one that moves the pen? Because the vig-



orous exercise of the muscles produces development and strength. And why is the educated man capable of grasping an intricate and difficult subject, which the unlearned and ignorant cannot fathom? Not simply because he has more knowledge; but because his mental powers have been strengthened and developed by exercise; while the mind of the other has lain dormant and inactive. This is true of the Christian in two ways: first, in relation to his ability to apprehend and explain divine truth; and second, in relation to the growth and vigor of his christian graces. A Christian who employs what ability he has in the instruction of a class in the Sabbath school, or in religious conversation, will increase in divine knowledge tenfold more than one who exercises his mind only in hearing and reading. The contact with other minds, and the necessity of understanding what he communicates, invigorates his powers; and the graces of his heart are quickened by calling into exercise his zeal for the glory of God, his compassion for perishing souls, his spirit of prayer, his patience in labor, his faith and hope, his perseverance. There is as much difference be-

tween the active and the passive Christian as there is between the cistern that receives the water which the rain pours into it, and the well which is supplied from a living spring deep down in the earth.

These results are seen everywhere whenever the experiment is tried. I have seen young men, who had never opened their mouths in religious meetings, after laboring a few months in a mission Sabbath school, receive as it were a new life, and develop gifts of rare value to the church. I knew a man, many years ago, who before his conversion seemed to be a person of very small capacities and acquirements. But as soon as the new life entered his soul, it manifested itself. He began to labor for other souls with his one talent. He took a class in a mission Sabbath school. He prayed in meetings. He conversed with his fellow-men. He grew not only in grace, but in knowledge and capacity, to the surprise of every one; till at length he was chosen an elder in an intelligent and cultivated city congregation.

So, likewise, the strength of the church is in

her aggressive, missionary character. Her whole history shows that, when she puts herself on the defensive, and aims chiefly at maintaining her position and seeking her own edification, she soon loses her vitality and falls into decay; or else she becomes the prey of dissensions, schisms, or apostasies. But, whenever she has put herself on the offensive, and made direct war on the kingdom of darkness, "her little one has become a thousand, and her small one a strong nation." This accords with the principles declared and exemplified in the word of God: "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth: and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." The strength of the church lies, not in its contraction, but in its expansion. When Elijah met the widow of Zarephath, and asked her for a morsel of bread, she said she had only a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse, and she was gathering two sticks to dress it for herself and her son, that they might eat and die. The prophet replied, "Make me a little cake thereof first." This would seem a hard requisition, — to ask of her a portion of the last

morsel in her house when there was a famine in the land. But she obeyed; and the barrel of meal and the cruse of oil wasted not. She and her household and the man of God ate thereof many days, till the Lord sent rain upon the earth. This, to be sure, was a miracle; but it illustrates a general principle, of universal application. It agrees, also, with the analogy of nature, and with the history of God's providence. The principle is *dispersion* rather than *concentration*. Those trees and plants that multiply most profusely are provided with downy wings, attached to their seeds, which scatter them in all directions, with every wind that blows; or, in other cases, God has provided the bird which feeds on the fruit, to transport its seed to distant lands. God's providence carries out the same principle in his dealings with men. After the flood, when the children of Noah would have settled down in the land of Shinar, he sent down and destroyed their works, and by confounding their language, obliged them to disperse. After Christ's ascension, when the disciples would have remained at Jerusalem, and confined their efforts

to their own countrymen, he sent a persecution, to scatter them abroad, that they might disperse the good seed of the word.

Whenever a church enlarges her efforts for the benefit of the destitute, whether in giving or in personal labor, the effort will not diminish but increase her strength. Suppose the members of a church to be all engaged in sustaining her own institutions, and her affairs move on with regularity, until everything assumes the air of stereotyped monotony. If she goes on so, she will very likely become completely *fossilized* and powerless. But let some of them, moved with compassion for souls, look out a destitute field, visit the people who live in the neglect of religion, establish a Sabbath school, and maintain religious meetings. A new element of life has entered that church. The fire kindled in these hearts will glow and burn till they cannot contain it. It will warm other hearts, and produce commotion, and wake up the sleepers. And very likely the Spirit of the Lord will be poured out, gathering the young into the church, bringing their youthful vigor and enthusiasm to the work, and giving fresh impulse to every

department of labor. Would not this be a greater accession of strength than could have been secured by the same labor bestowed within the pale of the church and congregation? But in addition to the promised blessing upon him that "scattereth," such a course of labor tends naturally to such a result.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### CONNECTION OF PRAYER WITH THE DISPENSATION OF MERCY.

THE Prophet Ezekiel, after describing, in glowing terms, the blessings of the new covenant, concludes with this significant declaration: "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." Among these blessings are the following: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A *new heart* also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments to do them." This passage is very explicit, evidently referring to the renewing and sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit. Yet for all this, he declares that

he will be "*inquired of*;" an expression used to denote seeking the Lord by prayer. He would be inquired of for the blessings which he had promised, and verified by the declaration, "I the Lord have spoken it and I will do it." This establishes a connection between prayer and the dispensation of mercy; and it appears, from this passage, that God has ordained, as a part of his plan of dealing with his people, that the blessings he bestows upon them, and especially spiritual blessings, shall be in answer to prayer. But, upon what grounds has he so determined?

It is certainly *not* because he needs information concerning our wants. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do;" and he knows what things we have need of before we ask him. He knows our desires; and he knows infinitely better than we what things would be good for us. The object of prayer, therefore, cannot be to impart any information to God, either concerning our wants or our desires.

Neither does God bestow blessings in answer to our prayers because there is any *merit* in them. Prayer, though a duty enjoined in the word of



God, and an act acceptable to Him, is not a *meritorious* act. It has nothing in it of the nature of merit. "Prayer is the offering up of our desires to God, for things agreeable to his will, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies." It is an act becoming in one who sues for grace, with the acknowledgment of his own unworthiness, and the feeling that, by reason of his character as a sinner, he can perform no meritorious act. It is supplication for unmerited favor. And God does not bestow blessings in answer to prayer, *as a reward of merit* for the prayers offered. After rehearsing the promises we have referred to, he reminds his people of their unworthiness, saying, "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and for your abominations;" and then adds with emphasis, "*Not for your sakes* do I this, be it known unto you;" so that his subsequent declaration that he would be inquired of to do it for them, gives no intimation that he would bestow it as a *reward of merit*.

Nor is it *because he needs persuasion*, in order

to be placable or merciful, that God waits to be inquired of before he bestows the blessings of his grace. He is, in his own nature, merciful. *Mercy* is one of his eternal and unchangeable attributes; and he has, out of his mere mercy, and self-moved beneficence, made provision for harmonizing the claims of Justice with the exercise of Mercy. Therefore he needs no persuasion to induce him to be merciful, or to dispose him to grant the blessings we need.

Neither is it the design or object of prayer to *change the mind or purposes of God*. His purposes are eternal and unchangeable. He "declares the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." "He is in one mind, and who can turn him? And what his soul desireth, even that he doeth." And who is so presumptuous as to think of changing the mind of the infinite and unchangeable Jehovah? It is nevertheless true that his administration is eternally and unchangeably affected by the prayers of his people. It even enters into his eternal purpose that he will be so affected; and the offer-

ing up of the prayers, in answer to which his blessings are bestowed, is as much the subject of that purpose as the blessing itself. These prayers are the fruit of his grace: *I will pour* upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem," he says, "*the spirit of grace and of supplication.*" Those very desires that are offered up to God are excited by the Holy Spirit. "For we through him have access, *by one Spirit*, unto the Father." "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints, *according to the will of God.*" This is one part of his gracious dispensation, necessary to secure the end in view; which, while it shows our dependence, fastens upon us our own obligations. And, though we may not perceive fully the reasons, which influenced the Divine Mind in ordaining this connection between prayer and the dispensation of his mercies, yet we can see

reasons enough to show the wisdom and propriety of this arrangement.

First, there is a *moral fitness* in it. Prayer is an act of worship; and worship is due from the creature to the Creator. The creature is dependent upon the Creator for all things; and it is meet and proper that such dependence should be felt and acknowledged. Man is not only a *dependent*, but a *sinful* creature; and it is suitable and becoming that he should confess his sins to the Supreme Ruler, whose laws he has violated, to his Heavenly Father, whom he has offended. God is the source of all blessings. It is becoming in dependent beings to resort to him in time of need. And as sinful creatures deserve nothing from his hand, it is suitable that we should render thanks to him for the blessings which he bestows.

As to the propriety of intercessory prayer for others, it may be observed that, while God in his sovereignty carries on his own work in the earth, supplies the wants of the needy, and delivers the oppressed, with his own hand; his people are the agents he employs to build up his cause, to carry on his work, and to minister

to the necessities of the destitute. It is, therefore, becoming in them to ask counsel of Him by whom they are so employed, and seek his efficacious power to give success to their efforts. They can do nothing independent of Him; and to require them to ask his blessing on their endeavors, and never to bestow it without being inquired of by them, tends directly to keep up in them a sense of their dependence. Nor does the fact that they are dependent on God for the very ability and disposition to pray to him furnish any greater objection against the act, than the fact that they are dependent upon God for the power and disposition to inhale the breath of life, against the effort to breathe. The efficiency of God and the agency of the creature are inseparable in both cases.

Another reason is found in the *influence which prayer exerts upon ourselves*. What else could bring us into a suitable attitude for receiving the blessing of God's grace? The invoking of God as our heavenly Father, tends to produce a sense of dependence, and to keep alive the feeling of filial affection, or, as Paul calls it,

the "spirit of adoption." *Adoration* brings before us the character and attributes of God, and impresses us with holy awe and filial fear. It fills the mind with solemnity, in view of his Omnipresence, gives reality to things unseen, and inspires confidence in view of his ability and disposition to fulfil his promises. It quickens our love, by the review of his excellence and the rehearsal and praise of his goodness. *Confession* calls to mind our own character, fills us with a sense of unworthiness, quickens conscience, and excites penitence. *Supplication* impresses us with our own wants, and *intercession* with the wants of others. And gratitude is awakened by *thanksgiving*. All these affections are necessary to prepare us rightly to receive the blessings which God is wont to bestow upon his sinful creatures. And this shows why he withholds his answers to our prayers till they present certain characteristics set forth in his word as necessary to acceptable prayer. To bestow blessings upon us without these, would be to do us an injury; since they could not do us good, if we were not prepared to receive them. These characteristics

are, humility and self-abasement; a sense of need; earnest desire; confidence in God and faith in his promises; supreme regard for his glory; importunity; perseverance against obstacles; and submission to the will of God. It would injure us to receive the things we ask for, without these dispositions of heart. Prayer tends to produce these dispositions; and where it is but weak and imperfect, God's delaying to answer our prayers, and our importunity and perseverance, under these delays, tend to increase and strengthen them.

It would be as easy for the Almighty to bestow his blessings without prayer as with it, but it would not be as wise. The divine wisdom is conspicuous in this feature of his administration. He bestows his mercy in answer to prayer that it may the better accomplish its objects. The inseparable connection of divine and human agency, in the work of salvation, is here clearly seen. The two great subjects of dependence and free agency are here brought together and seen beautifully to harmonize. While it makes the grace of God the source of all the good within us, it shows

the necessity, in every stage of it, for the coöperation of the creature. The apostle exhorts us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, *because* it is God that works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure. Thus, we have a motive to pray to God for the blessings we need, because he gives us the spirit of supplication. And while we feel our own impotence, we have the highest encouragement to pray for his blessing to attend our endeavors, because he declares that for all that he has promised to do for his people, he will be inquired of by them to do it for them. Therefore, however great, glowing, and wonderful are the promises and predictions of the latter-day glory of Zion, that day will not come without the prayers of God's people; because, with those promises, he has recorded the declaration, that, for all these things he will be inquired of by them. And the consistency of the two is explained, when it is understood that all true prayer is the fruit of grace wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, if not by his direct dictation. And this removes all the mystery that envelops the fact that God hears and answers prayer.



We find here, also, a strong motive to be diligent, earnest, and faithful in prayer. This is the only channel through which spiritual blessings flow into the soul. However many, great and precious the promises of God, he will be inquired of by his people to do for them the things which he has promised. If they do not ask they will not receive.

The same is true, also, of unregenerate men. Among the things specified, for which God will be inquired of, is a *new heart*; and that is what the natural man needs, in order to become a child of God. Nor do we countenance “unregenerate doings,” as acceptable to God, by exhorting the sinner to pray; since we do but exhort him to perform a duty enjoined in God’s word; and that not with an impenitent unbelieving heart, but with penitence and faith. And who can tell but that, in the very act of attempting to perform a christian duty, so obviously binding on all, God may give him grace to do it in a right manner? There is no hope of any improvement in his condition, while he continues to live a prayerless life. It is a mark of the wicked, whom God abhors, that

they “cast off fear and restrain prayer before God.” The prayerless soul is a guilty soul. What an ungrateful return it must be to the greatest and best of beings, on whose bounty we are feeding every day, to rise up in the morning and lie down at night, without once speaking to Him, to acknowledge our dependence, entreat his favor, or thank him for his mercies. I never heard of any one being converted without attempting to pray; and it seems scarcely possible that right feelings can ever be produced in the soul, except it be under the influence of prayer. It is scarcely possible to conceive of the exercises which are preparatory to receiving Christ, as existing in a prayerless soul. Let a person be thoroughly awakened, and you cannot keep him from prayer. He will not stop to inquire whether his prayers are acceptable, but he will cast himself down before God, and cry out, “God be merciful to me a sinner!”

## CHAPTER VIII.

### PRAYER MEETINGS.

As this work is designed chiefly to bring the lay element of our churches into more vigorous contact with the unevangelized masses; and as meetings for prayer and christian conference, in connection with christian visitation, are among the most effective means to this end, some suggestions on the subject may not here be out of place.

Prayer-meetings have ever been the life of the church; or rather, the channel through which that life has manifested itself. But, for the most part, they have, until recently, attracted little notice from the world. They have been attended by few except members of the church, and of them, only the most spiritual portion. There may be exceptions to this remark, but in general, so far as my observation extends, it has been true.

In times of awakening, it has been otherwise; and yet never to such an extent as in the recent Revival (1858). Of this work of grace, the general disposition of all classes to attend such meetings has been a marked feature. To me it seems to be one of the most encouraging signs of a new era in the churches.

CONVENTIONS FOR PRAYER.

Twelve years ago, one of the pioneer home missionaries in the West, wrote to me as follows: "Last summer, we had a refreshing season at the convention at D———. God smiled upon us in that convention, and we hoped that the brethren would have remained together a longer season for prayer, until we were "endued with power from on high." But they hastened away before they laid hold of the blessing; and my hopes were disappointed. This, with other things, has led me to think much of striving to introduce such conventions for the single object of prayer and devotional exercises,—such as are predicted in Zech. 8: 20 as being held before the future conversion and restoration of the children of Israel: an event which

will be as 'life from the dead,' to the church of God. 'Thus saith the Lord of hosts, It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts. I will go also.' It appears to me that such conventions might be held now, and if held, would do more good than all the associations and assemblies of our churches, where there is so much discussion on points that improve neither the mind nor heart. That they will be held, I have no doubt; and I pray God to put it into the hearts of his people to hold them ere this year shall close. Suppose you think of it, and propose to begin one in your region to close this year and begin the next in such a meeting, and to continue until you have sought God in united and fervent prayer, so that you know he has heard your requests? Has prayer, as a means of promoting personal holiness; of removing obstacles to the spread of the Gospel; of reviving the graces and uniting the hearts and efforts of God's people; and of securing general pure and powerful revivals of relig-

ion, at home and abroad, had a fair trial? There was one trial, at the opening of the Gospel dispensation, when one hundred and twenty continued ten days in prayer; but the power of prayer, as it might be displayed in a convention of holy hearts and minds, assembled for the sole purpose of prayer and seeking the Lord of hosts, has never yet been displayed on earth. But it is one of the means which I am persuaded must be used, before a nation shall be born in a day."

I laid the suggestion of this good brother before the christian public, in one of the religious papers of the day, but heard no response to it, from any quarter. It, however, produced a strong impression upon my own mind, which I have never forgotten. And, it is remarkable that the first public movement, preparatory to the present work of grace, was the holding of such conventions as that here recommended. A convention of four synods, to the number of two hundred ministers and laymen, met for prayer and consultation, as to the revival of religion, just before the close of the last year, at Pittsburgh, Pa., and continued in session three days. And not long after another similar

convention was held in Cincinnati. Moreover, the "Union Prayer-Meetings," which have since extended all over the land, have been emphatically *conventions for prayer*. They have consisted of informal representations from the various churches of different denominations. Those that have been held in the city of New York have had an immediate constituency of nearly a million of people; besides which, delegates have been present at the daily meetings, from all parts of the land, east, west, north, and south. Nor is it a matter of insignificance that these meetings have to so great an extent, and without concert, been held at the same hours, in all parts of the land. The promise of the Saviour's presence, in these meetings, is made to *agreement* in prayer. And, since there was a universal agreement to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, it is comely and proper that there should be an agreement as to the time.

#### DEFECTS IN PRAYER.

Since these meetings have assumed such importance, a few hints and suggestions to those who

conduct them, and to those who take part in them, may not be out of place in this work. They are, however, offered with diffidence; because, "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;" and this gives interest to a meeting, while nothing else can supply its place. Still, at such times, the good effects of such meetings are often marred by want of judgment and tact in the person who leads, or want of good sense on the part of those who take part in the exercises. The defects of prayer-meetings have been pointed out, and efforts made to correct them, ever since my recollection; and yet, the language applied by Bunyan to his "Slough of Despond," seems equally appropriate here: "It is not the pleasure of the King that this place should remain so bad. His laborers have, by the direction of His Majesty's surveyors, been, for above these sixteen hundred years, employed about this patch of ground, if perhaps it might have been mended: yea, there have been swallowed up at least twenty thousand cart-loads, yea, millions of wholesome instructions, that have at all seasons been brought from all places of the King's dominions, if so be it might have been



mended; but it is the Slough of Despond still, and so will be when they have done what they can.”

The most common fault in prayer-meetings arises from the tendency of things to *fossilize* and grow into a stiff, formal routine. This is an evil that it is not easy to remedy, except by a general rising up to a higher spiritual life. Yet this evil itself stands in the way of such a change. A set and stiff formality operates like an iron cap on the head of an infant, to prevent growth. No improvement can be expected till it is broken up.

The common faults, committed by those who lead in social prayer have so often been pointed out, and yet so seldom rectified, that it seems a hopeless task to repeat them. I shall, however, mention a few of the most prominent :

1. *Praying in a circle.* Some men have a certain mould into which they run all their prayers. They must always travel the same round. No matter if they have a specific object set before them, they must travel the circle before they can reach it; and before they get through, they often forget that specific object. I have frequently

known special requests for prayers entirely disregarded in this way. Where there are a number of persons to engage in prayer, it is not necessary that every prayer should embrace every object of petition, or even all the parts of prayer. "Prayer is the offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with thankful acknowledgment of his mercies." If a man has any desires that press on his heart, he does not require a set form of words, or a stereotyped phraseology to express them. But he comes with the simplicity and directness of a child to its parent, and expresses the feelings of his heart. If he has no desires, he cannot offer to God what he has not. If he feels his sins, his confessions will gush out of a broken heart. If gratitude is in his heart, it will find a hearty expression. Such incense needs no brazen censer. It rises up from a burning heart, a "sweet-swelling savor" to the Lord.

2. *Preaching prayers.* Some good men undertake to describe all the faults of their brethren, in their prayers, and to set forth the states of mind of all the various classes of sinners. It is impossi-

ble not to feel that such prayers are designed for the ears of men rather than of God; nor is it easy to suppress the shock that the mind feels at such unbecoming irreverence.

3. *Use of hackneyed, repulsive, and cant phrases.*

An offence against good taste hinders the devotion of a serious mind. However much we may seek to suppress it, disgust is involuntary; and when the sense of propriety is offended, even the effort to suppress this involuntary emotion distracts the mind, and prevents edification. Hence, it is the duty of those who lead in social prayer, to study such propriety of expression as shall prevent anything falling repulsively upon the ears of those who are attempting to join in the exercise.

4. *Misquoting Scripture.* The use of Scripture language in prayer is profitable, provided it expresses the feelings of the heart, and is not perverted, or made formal by constant use. But misquoting a familiar passage disturbs the devotions of others, by leading the mind away to the correction, and thus distracting the thoughts. For instance: To the passage, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the

midst of them," the words, "*and that to bless them,*" are not unfrequently added — words that are not found in Scripture. This is only one of a multitude. The objection does not lie against mingling Scripture expressions with our own language, but quoting as Scriptures what is not such. By a mind familiar with the Scripture such a thing will be instantly detected, to the distraction of the thoughts and the injury of devotion.

5. *A loud, confident tone.* This reminds us of Elijah's ironical address to the prophets of Baal: "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." The venerable Dr. Lyman Beecher says: "Whenever the humble boldness, the brokenness of heart, the prostration of spirit in the dust are gone; the tender inimitable pathos of the soul evaporated; and the still small voice of simple, unaffected importunity, exchanged for loud, confident, unhumbled supplication, we may soon witness the gradual suspension of divine influence." This was the result of his observation, in a long experience in revivals.

6. *Forced excitement.* This hardly expresses my idea. But men sometimes *work themselves up* into a frenzy, catching the breath, and laboring in a kind of physical agony, painful to others and exhausting to themselves. Paul would say to them, "Bodily exercise profiteth little."

7. *Want of Reverence.* An undue familiarity, or addressing God in tones or in a manner which indicates the want of a proper sense of his glorious majesty and infinite holiness, and of our own insignificance and unworthiness, not only shocks the sensibilities of humble Christians, but it must be offensive to Him, "who is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and had in reverence of all them that are about him." Reverence and awe are in perfect consistency with the true "spirit of adoption."

#### CONDUCTING PRAYER-MEETINGS.

*Who shall take the lead of the Prayer-Meeting?* This is an important question, and one that will be answered variously, from different standpoints. One strongly attached to a pastor, and ready to watch his lips as an oracle, will always

wish to see him in the chair. This *feeling* is right. And, if the pastor is a man of *tact*, as well as of ability, it is probable that, taking into view only the simple matter of edification, it might be best for him always to be there. The practice in many churches is, for the pastor always to preside when he is present, and in his absence, the senior elder or deacon. In other churches, the chair is occupied by the official members in rotation. And in some, it passes in turn, to all who take part in the services. There are some advantages in each of these practices. The pastor ought to be, and I suppose generally is, better qualified to lead the meeting to edification than any other person. But what is lacking in ability and use, may be made up in variety. And there is an object to be gained by letting this duty pass round among all the brethren, even greater than simply that of edification. This meeting should be regarded partly in the light of a *training school*, to prepare the soldier of the cross for effective action, in their assaults on the kingdom of darkness. This is of incalculable importance. Where there is so much need of lay effort as there is in our cities, and in

many parts of the country, no means should be spared to bring out and develop all the talent there is in the churches. In a population so migratory as ours, no one can tell how soon he may be thrown into circumstances where he will be called upon to take the lead in organizing society. And, if this should not happen, there is scarcely a locality, even in the older parts of the country, where a missionary field may not be found by one who "has a mind to work." In our arrangements, I think this point is too generally overlooked. We are accustomed to look too much to our own edification, and to antiquated ideas of official position and "order," so as to forget the training of a church to labor in the Master's vineyard. But, where all the talent in a church is brought out in the prayer-meetings; even though there be some crudities, the defect is more than counterbalanced by the increased life and spirit infused into the meeting. Official gravity and order often settle down like *nightmare* upon a meeting; everything is spell-bound; and the very atmosphere seems enchanted. It is better to be disturbed by a slight indiscretion than by the snore of the sleeper. Even

a little excitement will do no harm. A thunder shower is better than a dead calm. There was no rain in paradise, but there went up a gentle mist to water the earth. That was better than thunder showers and storms; but we are not in paradise. We must, in our fallen state, take God's blessings as he sends them, whether in the gentle dew, the copious shower, or the driving tempest. And no more can we prescribe the form in which he shall send us spiritual blessings. Let us be thankful for them, in whatever form they come. Nothing is to be dreaded so much as the desolating drought, the powdered dust, the fallow ground, the desert land.

But whatever plan is adopted for conducting the meeting, the leader should be previously designated, that he may make due preparation. He should have his hymns and portion of Scripture selected beforehand, that no delay may occur in the meeting. He should study the portion of Scripture, and get his mind filled with stirring thoughts. But let him not undertake to make a discourse. The most that he should attempt to say is, to throw out suggestions and start trains of thought for the brethren to follow up. He should aim at unity of



impression. Therefore, his hymns and Scripture and remarks should, if possible, tend to some point. And all these services should be short. A long hymn: a whole chapter, containing several different subjects; and a long, prosy address, to begin with, will spoil any meeting. The leader should feel that his place is not himself to occupy the time, but to call out and direct others. It is the practice in some meetings to have no person take part except as he is called upon by the leader; in others, for the meeting to be thrown open to all, and none called upon. Neither of these, exclusively followed, works well. If none take part except when called upon, a stiff formality is thrown over the meeting. On the other hand, where none are called upon, we are subject to long and painful pauses; or, the meeting may pass entirely out of the control of the leader, and disorder ensue. Both should be combined. The leader should be quick to discern and prompt to act. Much of the life and spirit of the meeting depend upon him. Having opened the meeting, he may give liberty to all to speak or pray; but he must be ready, if none embrace the opportunity, to call on some one

to pray or speak; or he may give out a hymn. But it is by no means essential to the profitable-ness of a meeting that there should be any speaking at all. It is better to speak to God than to man. And by prompt action, he may prevent the impression of dulness, which fastens on the minds of the people when there is a backwardness in speaking. The person who leads the singing, or others who can sing, may do much towards making a meeting lively and spirited, by striking up a verse or portion of a hymn voluntarily, which relieves the formality and monotony of a meeting. The young people ought to be encouraged to commit to memory the hymns most frequently sung, and to learn the tunes so thoroughly, as to be able to sing both hymn and tune without book. The tendency to routine is so great that I would never pursue a prescribed course, but vary it as much as possible on every occasion. This may the more easily be done, where there are different persons to lead. If a leader has tact, it is easy to control a meeting, where the feeling is deep, and prevent its running into disorder. But it is hard to wake up dulness and stupidity.

It often happens that there are two or three conceited persons who are disposed to take part in every meeting and to consume the time in "unprofitable talk." They soon become unacceptable to the people and give the meeting an unpleasant savor. And yet they are the last to perceive it. They ought to be kindly admonished in private; but if this fails, the leader of the meeting should interpose, and at least prevent their occupying an undue portion of the time. If allowed to have full scope, they will drive the people away.

## HINTS TO THOSE WHO LEAD IN PRAYER.

1. *Preparation.* If you were going before an earthly governor, to beg for your own life or that of a friend, and he were the only person that had power to pardon the criminal condemned to death, could you help thinking, with intense anxiety, about the object of your petition? Would it not be the absorbing subject of your thoughts? With what consistency, then, can you come before the Creator and Governor of the universe, to ask for the life of your immortal soul or to intercede for that of a fellow-being guilty of high treason

against his government and justly condemned to eternal misery, without first thinking, with deep and trembling anxiety, about the object of your petition? But when you go to a prayer-meeting, you must not only be prepared to approach God, but also to *unite* with others in petitions before his throne. Yet many people lose sight, altogether, of this obligation, and go to a prayer-meeting simply to get their own feelings stirred, and their own hearts warmed; and if they fail in this, they complain of the meeting as cold and dull. But the closet is the place to get the heart warm. You, my brother, have no more right to go to the meeting with a cold heart than I have. It is your duty, as much as it is that of any other person, to go there with a warm heart, carrying with you objects of petition which press upon your own soul, and contribute your share to the edification of the meeting. And you, my sister, are under equal obligation to carry with you a spirit of prayer, that your desires may be offered up in unison with the congregation, and help to swell the petition that goes before the Majesty on high. If all would seek preparation in the closet, by prayer

and meditation, and go to the meeting with warm hearts, there could not fail of being a running together, a unity of feeling, that would glow and burn and kindle into a flame. But when one comes to a prayer-meeting with a cold heart, and is called upon to pray, he does not lead the devotions of others. He has no errand but his own to the throne of grace. He does not *feel in unison* with his brethren. He feels intensely on no point. He wanders over the world; embraces a multitude of objects, entirely foreign to the particular one for which *special* prayer is to be made; prolongs the exercise to a tedious length; introduces vain repetitions in reference to almost every object embraced in his petition, amplifying upon every idea, expressing it in several different forms of speech. Then, perhaps, he begins to feel a little warmed, and returns and goes over the same ground a second time. In this way he chills the feelings of others, and diverts their attention also from the *special* object for which they are assembled. There are "dead flies" enough in such a prayer to spoil the savor of the whole meeting.

2. *Constant attendance* upon the prayer meeting

is necessary to promote unity of feeling. When a brother has been several times absent he will generally have lost something of his interest. His feeling is not up to the standard which prevails in the meeting. If he leads in prayer, he does not lead the feelings of others. There is something special in the spirit of prayer exercised by a church agonizing for the conversion of souls. But it is seldom that the great body of the church enter fully into this with spirit. It is chiefly confined to a "little band." When they come together, burdened and "pressed in spirit," and the prayers are chiefly offered up by persons who are not awake to the feelings that pervade their bosoms, the true state of feeling is not represented in the prayers. A chill is cast over the assembly. Those who were longing for the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit, not meeting with a fellowship of feeling, are grieved and wounded; and perhaps their faith is weakened, and they go away discouraged. Great responsibility rests upon those who direct the exercises on such occasions. The failure of one prayer-meeting at such a time may be attended with disastrous results.

### 3. *Study the Scriptural examples of Prayer.*

The first one we meet with is that of Abraham interceding for Lot. The characteristics of this prayer are, benevolent regard for others, and persevering importunity. The next is that of Abraham's servant;<sup>1</sup> it is short, simple, fervent, direct; asking without any circumlocution for the thing which he desired. The prayer of Moses in Ex. 32: 31, shows deep feeling and self-annihilation; but it is contained in a very few words. The next<sup>2</sup> is a little longer, and expressive of a desire for the presence of the Lord, so intense as to swallow up every other desire. When his sister was stricken with leprosy, the language of his prayer was as simple and direct as it could be: "Heal her now, O Lord, I beseech thee." In Numbers, 14: 13-19, when the Lord had threatened to smite his people with pestilence and disinherit them, Moses offered a prayer, which is a perfect specimen of *pleading*. He enters into a concise, direct, and forcible argument, to show that the heathen would exult, and say that God was not able to deliver his people; and then he appeals, with inimitable

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 21: 12-14.

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 33: 13, 15, 16.

pathos, to the character of God, as long-suffering and merciful, to forgive them. The prayer of Joshua, after Israel had turned their backs upon their enemies, expresses intense feeling, but his regard for the glory of God was the great burden of his soul. After briefly rehearsing the evils that had befallen them, and the exultations of the heathen, he concludes, "And what wilt thou do unto thy great name?"<sup>1</sup> He was more concerned for the glory of God than for the disasters which had befallen the people. And the intense agony of his spirit found vent in a very few words. The prayer of Hezekiah,<sup>2</sup> on the occasion of the blasphemous message of the king of Assyria, begins with an acknowledgment of the Lord as the only true God, and an humble request that his petition might be heard. He then briefly reviews his case, and concludes with a direct and simple petition for deliverance. It was an emergency on which his kingdom was at stake; and the prayer is complete, covering the whole ground. Yet it would not occupy two minutes in the delivery. Again,

<sup>1</sup> Josh. 7: 7-9.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Kings 19: 15-19.



when the prophet informed him that he must die, his prayer was still more brief: "I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight." And then he turned away and wept. Yet this prayer was heard, and fifteen years were added to his life. The prayer of Nehemiah,<sup>1</sup> on going in before the king, to ask deliverance for his people, contains an acknowledgment of God; confession of sin; a recital of God's promise; and a petition for the object desired, all in a simple, humble, fervent spirit, without circumlocution or repetition. It was less than two minutes in length. The prayer of Ezra<sup>2</sup> is a little longer, but it is occupied in confession of sin, the enumeration of which required time. Even the prayer of Solomon, on the extraordinary occasion of the dedication of the temple, could not have occupied over five minutes.<sup>3</sup> The penitential prayer of David, in the fifty-first Psalm, is a perfect model of the outgushing of a broken heart. But it is not more than two or three minutes in length.

<sup>1</sup> Neh. 1: 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ezra 9: 5-15.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Ki. 8: 22.

The prayer of Daniel<sup>1</sup> contains an acknowledgment of God, adoration of his attributes, particular confession of sin for himself and his people, and fervent petition for pardon and deliverance; yet it is not over five minutes long. It was answered while he was yet speaking. I have read severe criticisms on the frequent use of the expressions, "O Lord," and "O God;" but they occur eleven times in this prayer, five times in the fifty-first Psalm, and frequently in other prayers recorded in Scripture. They are a natural expression of fervent devotion and confidence of God; though they may be repeated so often as to offend the ear.

The wonderful prayer of Christ, Jn. ch. 17, with his disciples, before his crucifixion, which embraced all the interests of his church to the end of time, would not exceed five minutes in length. It is direct, specific, fervent, and full of devout feeling. The prayer of the apostles, before filling the vacancy in their number occasioned by the treachery of Judas, was brief, pertinent, and embracing the single point that was before them,

<sup>1</sup> Daniel 9: 4-19.

and nothing else. And that prayer, on which the place where they were assembled was shaken, was not two minutes in length. It invokes God as the Creator and supreme Governor of the universe, recounts the rage and persecution of the Jews, and implores God to grant them boldness, by attesting the truths they uttered by miraculous powers. But above all, the "Lord's Prayer," designed as the pattern and model of all prayer, is distinguished for its brevity and comprehensiveness.

The prayers recorded in Scripture may be only a summary of what was said by the speakers; yet, admitting this, we shall still find them characterized by brevity, simplicity of language, directness, and unity of object. They are specific, rather than general; and instead of having the appearance of being made up for the occasion, they are made by the occasion, being the simple expression of pious feeling in the circumstances in which their authors were placed.

4. *It is Scriptural to agree together to pray for specific objects.* But when there is such an agree-

ment, the brother who wanders in his prayer to other objects, does not lead the devotions of the assembly, and therefore hinders the object of the meeting.

5. *Long prayers.* Long prayers are apt to be pointless and dull. They distract the associated worshippers with divers impressions, and prevent the concentration of feeling and desire upon the special object agreed upon. They injure the whole effect of a meeting, by preventing that agreeable variety produced by the fellowship of different minds. The expressions of one or two are not so likely to touch the affections of all, as when a greater number are engaged.

6. *Remember your prayers.* Be not like the man who, "beholding his face in a glass, goeth away and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." Do what in you lies to secure the answer to your own prayers, by coöperating with God in his work of grace in your own heart, and upon the hearts of others. Let your prayers, your alms, and your obedience, go up before God together.

<sup>1</sup> Mat. 18: 19, 20.

## EXHORTATIONS.

Long exhortations are entirely out of place in a prayer-meeting. The object is to *pray* rather than to *talk* or to *learn*. It is very proper, however, that soul-stirring appeals should be made, and that such truths as have a direct bearing upon the circumstances should be announced. But this should be done in a brief and pungent manner. An exhortation or a remark should come from a full heart, and be directly to the point. And when an idea is expressed, it should generally be left without enlargement. Let it come burning from the heart, to wake up thought and feeling in other hearts. But if diluted and spun out, so as to leave nothing for the mind of the hearer to do in digesting and applying it, the object may be lost.

It is rarely admissible to introduce personal experience into a public promiscuous prayer-meeting. It savors so much of self-complacency that it is dangerous to the person who does it, and not often edifying to others. But a person may express his feelings without any direct allusion to himself, in a way that will be deeply impressive. The truths that he has experienced, and which

press upon his heart, may be so announced that every one will feel it to be a personal testimony. It is proper and suitable also for one to express his feelings in view of present circumstances, and of the special objects of prayer proposed. And if Christians are conscious of having so lived as to dishonor Christ and hinder his work, confessions are in place.

But a public meeting is no place for a Christian to rebuke his brethren. If he has aught against any he should speak to them alone — “between thee and him *alone*,” Christ says. A fault-finding spirit will soon destroy the savor of a prayer-meeting. I never knew any good come from *scolding*. I have known brethren scold the empty seats, in a prayer-meeting, till they got out of temper themselves, and put others in ill-humor, and were in a fair way to empty all the seats.

It is a general complaint that prayer-meetings are not well attended. This will inevitably be the case, if they are stereotyped and petrified. When a dull and cold formality broods over a meeting, no one will go to it, except from a sense of duty; and the sense of duty is not strong

enough to lead unconverted persons to a meeting where they are not interested. But when a prayer-meeting is spirited and lively, as it ought always to be, it may become a most powerful means of grace to the impenitent. Such it has been in the revivals of this year; and of many such meetings, it may be said, "This and that man were born there."

## EXAMINE YOUR PRAYERS.

When Christians have been praying a long time for the conversion of souls and the revival of religion, and have not received answers to their prayers, it becomes them to examine and see whether they have not been asking amiss. To aid them in this, the following hints are given:

1. Your prayers may be selfish or earthly, without having the *glory of God* as their paramount and ultimate end.<sup>1</sup>

2. If you are indulging sin or neglecting duty, the Lord will not hear your prayers.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> James 4: 3. 1 Cor. 10: 31.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. 6: 18. Prov. 28: 9. Isa. 59: 1, 2.

3. An unforgiving temper will hinder your prayers.<sup>1</sup>

4. You may not have been sufficiently humble.<sup>2</sup>

5. You may not have asked in *faith*.<sup>3</sup>

6. Your supplications may not have been sufficiently earnest and importunate.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mark 11: 25, 26. Matt. 18: 35.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. 138: 6. Isa. 66: 2. 51: 15. 1 Pet. 5: 6. Jas. 4: 10.

<sup>3</sup> Jas. 1: 5-8. Mark 11: 24.

<sup>4</sup> Luke 22: 44. Jas. 5: 17. Acts 12: 5.



## CHAPTER IX.

### REVIVALS.

#### MAXIMS FOR CHRISTIANS.

1. It is the duty of every Christian to be *growing in grace*, and doing all he can to glorify God. And when Christians are in this state, there is a revival of religion; and if there are sinners to be converted, they will share in it.<sup>1</sup>

2. God hears and answers the prayers of his children, when they are in the way of obedience.<sup>2</sup>

3. When Christians pray and labor for the salvation of souls that God may be glorified, sinners will be converted.<sup>3</sup>

4. It is the *sinful* neglect of the church that prevents her from enjoying a perpetual revival.<sup>4</sup>

5. When no souls are converted in a congrega-

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 13: 11. 1 Thess. 5: 4—8. Eph. 5: 14. Is. 60: 1. 1 John 1: 6. Heb. 3: 15. 2 Cor. 6: 2.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John 3: 22. John 15: 7.

<sup>3</sup> Mal. 3: 10.

<sup>4</sup> Mal. 3: 10. Isa. 66: 8. Rev. 2: 4; 3: 15, 16.

tion, let no one charge the delinquency on *the church*. If he does his own duty God will bless him. Let him look at *home* and say, "Lord is it I?"<sup>1</sup>

6. If but *two* members of a church become truly revived themselves, and agree together, and offer up the prayer of faith for a revival of religion, they may expect that blessing will be granted.<sup>2</sup>

7. Let not God's people be discouraged because their numbers are few.<sup>3</sup>

8. Let not Christians spend their time, and divert their attention, by complaining to one another of those who stand back. It is not their business to curse them;<sup>4</sup> neither to *wait* for them; but to *go forward* in the strength of the Lord. There are many in the church who seem to be "twice dead, and plucked up by the roots." If you wait for them, you will never do anything.

#### HINDERANCES TO REVIVALS.

1. *Want of unity of feeling and effort* among the members of the church, and also between them

<sup>1</sup> Mat. 7: 1—5. Rom. 2: 1. Jas. 4: 11.

<sup>2</sup> Mat. 18: 19.

<sup>3</sup> Judges 7: 7. 1 Sam. 14: 1—16.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 12: 14.

and their pastor. A revived Christian may enjoy a state of feeling which the backslider in heart, who has grown carnal and worldly, cannot understand. A very important point in social prayer is, that the hearts of all present be *united* in their *feelings, desires, and petitions*. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" "If *two* of you shall *agree* on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father." Although this promise may have referred originally to miraculous events, the principle involved should doubtless be applied to ordinary cases. Before the mighty out-pouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the disciples "all continued *with one accord* in prayer and supplication." The original word translated *with one accord* is compounded of two words, the one signifying *like*, and the other *mind*: which shows that they must have thought and felt *alike*.<sup>1</sup>

2. *Indolence and the love of ease*, which cannot endure the persevering effort necessary to maintain such a spirit of prayer as that described in Rom. 8: 26, and such a system of self-denying ac-

<sup>1</sup> Amos 3:3. Mat. 18: 19. Acts 1: 14.

tivity as the conversion of souls requires. Our *rest* is in heaven.<sup>1</sup>

3. *Censoriousness.* The effect of free conversation about the faults of brethren is, to diminish our own brotherly love and esteem for the person whose character we have been discussing; to give employment for tale-bearers; and to stir up hard feelings and strife in the church. This, besides bringing guilt upon our own souls, will meet us in the prayer-meeting, and prevent the necessary union of feeling. Thus, the Spirit will be grieved away; for he cannot dwell in a heart that is a prey to jealous and bitter feelings.<sup>2</sup>

4. *Worldly amusements.* I may be censured, in this age, for mentioning these as hinderances to revivals; since some insist on *amusement* AS A DUTY. But in former times, the attendance of Christians upon parties of pleasure, dancing parties, and other worldly amusements, was considered incompatible with a revival of religion. I still believe this to be the dictate not of reason and Scripture only, but of *Christian feeling*, which

<sup>1</sup> Psalm 17: 15.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 1: 29, 30. Psalms 15: 3. Prov. 25: 23. 2 Cor. 12: 20. Tit. 3: 2. Eph. 4: 31. 1 Pet. 2: 1.

recoils from such things like the sensitive plant. No Christian can return from a scene of worldly amusement in a fit condition to "enter into his closet." And an awakened person who resorts to such places does it at the peril of his soul. If we cannot serve God and mammon, neither can we live in pleasure and serve the Lord, at the same time.<sup>1</sup>

5. *Finding fault with preaching.* This is especially injurious to children, when it comes from their parents. They will naturally feel more confidence in their parents than their minister; and if they get the impression that he is wrong upon one point, they will conclude he is wrong in everything. This prejudice, existing in their minds, may wholly destroy the effect of preaching. Again, when the sinner's conscience is smarting under the truth, if members of the church represent, in their conversation, that the preacher has been too hasty or too harsh, they thereby ease his conscience, and sustain him in his rebellion against God. Such professors of religion often act the part of traitors in the camp

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. 6: 14, 17.

of the living God, by strengthening the hands of his enemies in opposing the extension of his kingdom.

6. *Neglect of discipline* may hinder a revival.<sup>1</sup>

7. *Secret sins indulged in the hearts* of Christians, such as spiritual pride, self-seeking, self-complacency, envy, etc., may hinder a revival.<sup>2</sup> God will not countenance such unholy feelings; and when they are indulged, the Holy Spirit may be expected quickly to depart.

8. *Unbelief*. This, of all others, is the greatest hinderance to revivals. No sin is more dishonoring to God than unbelief. It is discrediting the word of the Almighty. We have the most awful warnings in his word against indulging it. We read of one place where Jesus did not many mighty works because of the unbelief of the people. If he did not work miracles on account of their unbelief, will he revive his work, and convert souls, while his people are filled with unbelief?<sup>3</sup>

9. *Resting in appearances*. This hinders faith. God is able to remove all obstacles. A revival

<sup>1</sup> Josh. chap 7.

<sup>2</sup> Psalms 66: 18. Prov. 28: 9.

<sup>3</sup> Mat. 13: 58. Rom. 11: 20, 21. Heb. 3: 12.

is the work of the Lord. Keep your eye steadily fixed on him, from whom alone help cometh. *Labor* as though the work were entirely your own,—*feel* as if it were God's work alone. If you look to appearances, when they are favorable you will be elated with the idea that you have obtained the blessing, begin to rejoice, relax your efforts, and ere you are aware the Spirit will be gone: when they are unfavorable, you will be discouraged, give way to unbelief, and so grieve the Spirit. It was looking at appearances, and forgetting the invisible arm of Jehovah, which led to all the rebellion of the children of Israel in the wilderness, which provoked God to swear in his wrath that they should not enter his rest.<sup>1</sup>

10. Trusting to ministers and the special efforts of the church is a hinderance.<sup>2</sup>

11. The *impression* that a *revival cannot long continue* is a hinderance. This leads Christians to think, as soon as they discover any decline of feeling, that the work is over. So they relax

<sup>1</sup> Ex. 5: 21; 23: 14: 10-15; 16: 2, 3; 17: 1-3.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. 17: 5, 7, 8. Ps. 84: 12. Ps. 34: 8. 2 Cor. 1: 9. Isa. 50: 10; 26: 4. Prov. 3: 5. Ps. 125: 1. Zech. 4: 6, 7.

their efforts, and quiet their consciences with the idea that it is not the Lord's will that it should continue. But if they would search their own hearts, they might find that *guilt* rests upon their souls. They have grieved away the Holy Spirit. If, on the first discovery of a decline of feeling, they would search out their sin, repent, humble themselves before God, and beg the return of the Holy Comforter, they might hope to ensure a continuance of his blessed presence.<sup>1</sup>

12. When the efforts for a revival have been crowned with success, "the declension of that strong sense of absolute dependence upon the special operations of the Holy Spirit, which pressed them down at the beginning," may grieve away the Heavenly Messenger, and stop the blessed work.

13. *Declining gratitude.* When Christians have been laboring and praying for a revival, the first few cases of conversion are received with great joy, and overwhelming gratitude, as evident tokens of the special presence of God's spirit. But when these cases multiply, they come to be

<sup>1</sup> Isa. 59: 1, 2. Jer. 5: 25; 3: 12. Mal. 3: 7. Zech. 1: 3.



viewed and spoken of as ordinary events; while, in truth, the cause of gratitude is increased in proportion to the number of conversions. May not such ingratitude be justly visited with the suspension of the special influences of the Holy Spirit?

14. "*Misguided, intemperate, and censorious zeal.*" When Christians divert their attention from the multitude who are going down to perdition, and from the Almighty Arm, which alone can save them, and spend their strength in unavailing efforts to bring the whole church to come up with them to the work, their revival spirit will be likely to degenerate into a spirit of "pride, impatience, and petulant rebuke," resulting in contention and strife, with which the Holy Spirit cannot dwell.

15. Christians should be especially careful never to be the cause of agitating the public mind during a revival, so as to "break the train of serious associations." A counter excitement may stop the blessed work.

16. *The collisions of different denominations* tend to hinder a revival. When these arise in

the course of a revival, they seldom fail to arrest the progress of the work. Oh, what an awful responsibility rests upon Christians in regard to this matter! How can those who promote these unhappy wranglings clear their skirts of the blood of murdered souls!

17. “*The fear that the revival will stop, and is about to stop, entertained by one and another, and whispered and propagated,*” may be the occasion of arresting its progress.

18. The feeling that the blessing obtained is enough to answer for the present; that as much time has been devoted to the work as can be spared; and that it may be well to stop and rest, and attend to the world, and to return to a revival effort again at some future time.” Ungrateful thought! Yet there is no doubt such thoughts often steal into the hearts of Christians, after having labored for a considerable time in a revival. Can it be wondered at, then, if the revival should cease?

19. *The decline of a genuine spirit of prayer in the church.* This spirit of prayer, which may be very properly termed the *revival spirit*, is thus

described by an eminent minister of the present age: "No man who ever felt it can fail to recognize it, as kindred cords are made to vibrate by each other's motion. It is a deep, constant, unutterable desire that God may be glorified in the salvation of souls, — it is love to God, — it is compassion for man, — it is gratitude, — it is broken-hearted, child-like desire, flowing from a full fountain, day and night, in ejaculations and protracted wrestlings at the throne of grace. In social supplication, it is simple, direct, heart-melted, and heart-melting, and poured out with tears, and sighings, and groanings, which cannot be uttered. I bear testimony to the glory of God, and the truth of his promises, that I have never known him to say to a church in which such a spirit of prayer prevailed, 'Seek ye me in vain.' But without this spirit of prayer a revival cannot be sustained; and when it declines, the glorious work must stop. Whenever the 'humble boldness, the brokenness of heart, the prostration of spirit in the dust, are gone; the tender inimitable pathos of the soul evaporated; and the still small voice of simple, unaffected importunity ex-

changed for earnest loud, confident, unhumbled supplication,' we may soon witness the 'gradual suspension of divine influence.'"<sup>1</sup>

20. *Finding fault with the work of God in other places.* There is perhaps nothing which will more effectually prevent the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon any people than the indulgence of this spirit by the church. What would be the consequence, if a farmer should neglect his own field, and spend his time in watching for the haltings of his neighbor, and finding fault with the *manner* in which he performs his work? It is very likely that his neighbor's crop might be injured by unskilful management; but *he* would have *no crop at all*. Again, suppose a man hears that a dear friend has just arrived in town; but, instead of running with open arms to meet him, he spends his time in collecting scandal from the mouths of busybodies, about the extravagant manner in which others have received him; and in talking about it in the presence of his family, until they all become suspicious that the newly-arrived person is not the

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Dr. Lyman Beecher.

*real friend*, but an *impostor*; suppose when he enters their dwelling, instead of meeting with a warm and cordial reception, every one shrinks from his embrace, —how long, think ye, would he remain in that house? Yet such is sometimes the attitude assumed by churches and individuals, with reference to the work of God in other places.<sup>1</sup>

Let us take home to our consciences this solemn truth: Where a revival exists, God's people may be guilty of *marring his work*; but where a revival does not exist, they are guilty of *preventing his work altogether*. It is the place of the former to remove the evils which human weakness has mixed with the work of the Lord — of the latter, to mourn over their own backslidings; to repent and humble themselves before God, till he shall return and bless them with the outpouring of his Spirit.

<sup>1</sup> Edwards' "Thoughts on Revivals of Religion."

## CHAPTER X.

### CONCLUDING ADDRESS.

CHRISTIAN reader! When you consecrated yourself to Christ, you laid yourself on his altar. You presented your body a *living*, not a *dead* sacrifice. You did not come to Christ *merely* to get relief from the burden of your guilt, to receive comfort, and to save your soul. You enlisted under his banner, as a soldier of the cross. You have known the "terror of the Lord;" will you therefore "persuade men?" Doth not the love of Christ constrain you; because you thus judge that, "if one died for all, *then were all dead.*" Yes; every man, woman, and child, that you see out of Christ, is "dead in trespasses and sins." And to what end did he *die for all?* "That they which live *should not henceforth live unto themselves*, but unto him which died for them and rose again." You are not your own. You are bought with a price.

You are not to *live unto yourself*, but unto him who hath purchased you with his own blood. By the very act of uniting yourself to Christ, you have renounced self, and devoted yourself to him. Have you then formed any definite purpose of life? Have you inquired how you may *live unto him*? Perhaps you have felt some fervent desires to do something for him who died for you. Perhaps you have replied to these gushing emotions as, like pent up fires, they seek vent in action, "What can I do? If I were a minister of the Gospel, I might do something for the honor of Christ. Or, if I could forsake my native land, and all that I hold dear to me in this world, and go "far hence to the Gentiles," then I should have some scope for christian heroism. But what can I do, pent up here, in a little insignificant circle?" But you need not go to India, or to China, or to Africa, or the Islands of the Sea, to find heathen. They are at your own door. That neighbor of yours who lives in the habitual neglect of religion — can you not speak to him? Can you not warn him of his danger? Can you not direct him to the same Saviour, who has brought your feet "out

of the horrible pit and the miry clay," and set them on a rock? Have you not a companion, a friend, a brother, a sister, or a child, out of Christ? And can you not speak to them, and pray for them, and labor for their conversion? Or do you not know, or can you not find some neglected child, whose parents have never taught him the fear of God, whom you can persuade to enter the Sabbath School, and there teach him the word of life? It may be that you can be the means, under God, of adding these jewels to the crown that adorns the Saviour's brow. And thus you may *live unto him*. He is building a spiritual temple. Can you not lay up some "lively stones" in its walls, who shall be to the praise of the glory of his grace? "The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish;" nevertheless the walls will go up when "the people have a mind to work."

This year has been a "year of the right hand of the Most High," when he has appeared in the power of his Holy Spirit to build up Zion. Have you participated in the blessing? Has your soul been quickened, and have you received a new



“unction from the Holy One?” Or have you been led by his grace for the first time to consecrate yourself to the Lord? And have you tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious? In this year, the Lord has added greatly to the numerical strength of the sacramental host. What shall be done, in order that this numerical strength may not be merely nominal, to swell the numbers, and yet add no real strength to the forces of Christ’s kingdom? One thing is certain: If those who have been quickened from a dead formality, or a death in trespasses and sins, in this Revival, shall sit down to the enjoyment of a kind of selfish religion that expends itself in mere feeling, the churches will soon relapse into their former state. The young converts will grow cold, and join hands with the world. Those who have seemed to be quickened and recovered from former backslidings will become luke-warm again and go on as they did before. And a deeper and more dreadful slumber will settle down upon us.

But if the new life that we have received continues, as in the few months past, to go out in prayer and effort for the salvation of other souls,

and thus a vigorous and persevering onset is made upon the kingdom of darkness, then will our life grow stronger and stronger, our light will burn brighter and brighter, and we shall see such wonders as we have never yet seen. Then may we expect to see some inroads made upon the mass of heathenism around us. Let us never forget that those who are not *with Christ* are *against him*. And, from the survey that has been made, it appears that the great and overwhelming majority of the people among whom we dwell, are not merely the secret and covert enemies of Christ; but that they show themselves openly as his enemies, by habitually absenting themselves from the rendezvous of his hosts, who gather themselves, in their appointed places, on his holy day, to show their allegiance to him. And we are mingled with this mass, that we might act upon it like leaven. If our hearts burn with the love of Jesus, it will constrain us to seek, by every means in our power, to persuade these enemies of Christ to return to their allegiance to him. And such efforts will strengthen the new life begun in our souls, and furnish new incentives to watchfulness, that no

inconsistent walk, no wavering inconstancy, no striking hands with the world, shall hinder the work, or paralyze our efforts. And, in these efforts we shall be made so constantly to feel our need of Divine aid, that it will drive us to the throne of grace, and thus keep the fire alive upon our own altars.

Why may not the blessed impulse this year given to the work of God go on and increase, till every soul in this land shall be redeemed from sin, and the wave here set in motion shall spread out over the face of the whole earth — till “the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most high God?”

What was the secret of the success of Harlan Page? Simply that he had a *passion for souls*. The love of souls was his ruling passion. Let every one of the two hundred thousand or more converts in this revival possess the same passion for the conversion of souls, and I see no reason why they may not be as successful as he was. And what would be the result? They would be instrumental, during their lives,

of the conversion of twenty millions of souls. And let the four and a half millions of professing Christians in this land possess the same spirit, and exercise it as he did, and they might be the means of converting one half the inhabitants of the globe. For if they were all animated by this divine passion as he was, they would not rest satisfied with the conversion of this land; but this being done, they would speedily spread the savor of Christ's name over the whole earth. There are other men, as humble-minded and unostentatious as Harlan Page, who are accomplishing similar results. There is one Bible class in Brooklyn, from which, under the same teacher, ninety persons have been added to the church within a few years. Nor is this by any means a solitary case. There are other classes in which similar results are continually realized. Nor is this success owing to any extraordinary talent, but to a simple, earnest desire and direct effort to convert souls. I do not ignore the great fact that the conversion of souls is the work of God. But it is not a miraculous work. It is a work which he accomplishes through the instrumentality of his people, and by his bles-

sing on their labors. And do not forget that God has declared his purpose to convert the world unto himself, and give to his Son the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. And now, with God's promised blessing, the conversion of the whole world to God, during this generation, is *practicable*. What the grace of God accomplished through the instrumentality of Harlan Page, it can do by every other Christian who will give his heart and soul and life to the work as he did. And, supposing there are but ten millions of true Christians in the world, ten millions multiplied by one hundred, makes a thousand millions, the population of the whole world. But this leaves out of the account what might be done by those who should be converted by these ten millions.

But leaving arithmetic aside, how many professing Christians there are who have never in their lives been the means of converting one soul. Yet we have no account, in the whole history of the church, of any Christian, male or female, young or old, who earnestly set himself or herself to work with the full purpose, but in dependence upon

God, to lead souls to Christ, without meeting with success. These things are constantly occurring around us. In one of our missions, a young woman was converted in an irreligious family; and her influence has been working there like leaven, till eight others have been brought to Christ in that family. Two or three years ago, a boy was converted in one of our mission schools, and he immediately set about the conversion of his companions. God blessed his efforts, and many of them have been brought into the fold of the Good Shepherd. And this needs only to become general, to lead to similar results. Let every one that is converted feel that he is a recruiting officer for the army of the Lord of Hosts, and soon we shall see such an onset upon the kingdom of darkness, as will shake its foundations from the centre to the circumference. We are planted in the vineyard of the Lord, that we may bear fruit to the glory of God. "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit." And we have the promise that "he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall *doubtless* return again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Though

we owe our own selves to the Lord, yet he does not require us to labor in this service without reward. There is no joy like that of welcoming new-born souls to the family of the redeemed. It is akin to that which swells the harmony of heaven as they strike their harps with notes of joy over one sinner that repenteth. Nor does his joy end here. He shall be permitted to rejoice over that soul, when he shall behold it, clad in garments of righteousness, shining in glory. "He that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins." And their works shall follow them. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." And how many we may greet there as our spiritual children, who can tell? for the soul that we are instrumental in bringing to Christ may be the means of converting a hundred others, and these in like manner, and thus go on accumulating in geometrical progression to the end of time! With such motives before us, who can be idle? But, if there were no such reward, can you look back upon

your own condition, as you saw it before you found deliverance in Christ, and not yearn over those who are in a like condition? If you are truly united to Christ, you will sympathize with his spirit. To promote the glory of God in the salvation of souls was the great object of his mission and of his passion. He loved the souls of men with an intense, unchangeable love, that led him to encounter the most amazing sufferings for their salvation. The apostle says, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." There is a union of spirit between him and Christ. Zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls will then be his ruling passion. For this he suffered. For this he died. For this he was glorified. And if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together. Kind reader, may you and I meet our Lord, with the glorified ones, whom we have brought to him; and we will rejoice together in those mansions of bliss which the Father has prepared for them that love him.

THE END.



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
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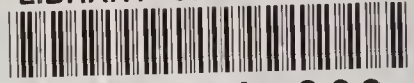








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